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Ye Gods And Little Fishes

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*YE GODS
AND LITTLE
FISHES*





YE GODS AND LITTLE FISHES

A TRAVESTY ON THE ARGO-
NAUTIC EXPEDITION IN QUEST
OF THE GOLDEN FLEECE.

BY
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Designs By J. L. Ludlow

CINCINNATI: MDCCCC
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TO
ADMIRAL GEORGE DEWEY
*in remembrance of the pleasant
days spent in his company on the
sunny shores of Greece
this travesty on the first
Great Naval Expedition
is respectfully inscribed
by
THE AUTHOR*

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PREFACE



In this travesty of the Quest of the Golden Fleece I have followed the route, and noted the incidents, as recorded in "The Argonautica" of Apollonius Rhodius, and as translated into English prose by Edward P. Coleridge, B.A., Oxford, England, from the revised text of R. Merkel, from the Laurentian MS. (Leipzig, 1852, Teubner's small edition.)

For the anachronisms, pseudo-poetics and mock-heroics (for which I have obtained a special mechanical license), and other absurdities, I must alone be held responsible and amenable to a patient and long-suffering public.

THE AUTHOR.

Bozeman, Montana.

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THE ARGUMENT OF THE “ARGONAUTICA.”

Tyro, the daughter of Salmoneus, had two sons by Poseidon, Neleus and Pelias; she afterwards wedded Cretheus, son of Æolus, and bore to him Æson, Pheres, and Amythaon. From Æson sprang Jason; from Pheres, Admetus; from Amythaon, Melampus.

Now Jason was handed over to the Centaur Chiron to be brought up and to learn the art of healing; while Æson, his father, left the kingdom to Pelias, his own brother, bidding him rule Thessaly until Jason's return from Chiron. But Pelias had received an oracle from Apollo, bidding him beware of a man who should come with only one sandal; for by him should he be slain.

So Jason grew up, and came to his uncle, for to take his share in his father's kingdom. But when he came to the river Anaurus, which is in Thessaly, wishing to ford it, there upon the bank he found Hera in the disguise of an old dame, and she would cross, but was afraid. Then did Jason take her upon his shoulders, and carry her safe over, but one sandal left he in the mud in the middle of the river. Thence he fared to the city with his one sandal, and there he found an assembly of the folk, and Pelias doing sacrifice to the gods. When Pelias saw him thus he minded him of the oracle, and being eager to be rid of him he set him this task, that he should go to Scythia in quest of the Golden Fleece, and then receive the kingdom. Now this he did from no

wish for the Fleece, but because he thought that Jason would be slain by some man in that strange land, or be shipwrecked.

This is the story of the Golden Fleece.

—(*From the Greek of the Scholiasts.*)

There was a curse in the family of Æolus from the day that two members of it, Athamas and his wife Ino, ill-treated Phrixus and Helle, two other Æolids. Zeus saved the two intended victims and put a curse upon the guilty family, which could not be revoked until the Golden Fleece was brought from Colchis to Hellas.

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A SECOND ARGUMENT.

Athamas, the son of Æolus, and brother of Cretheus, had to wife Nephele first, and begat two children, Phrixus and Helle. When Nephele died, he married Ino, who did plot against the children of Nephele, and persuaded her country-women to roast the seed for sowing; but the earth, receiving roasted seed, would not bear her yearly crops. So Athamas sent to Delphi to inquire about the barrenness; but Ino bribed his messengers, telling them to return and say, that the god had answered that Helle and Phrixus must be sacrificed if they wanted the barrenness to cease. Wherefore Athamas was persuaded, and placed them at the altar; but the gods in pity snatched them away through the air by means of the ram with the Golden Fleece; now Helle let go, and fell into the sea that bears her name, while Phrixus landed safe in Colchis. There he offered up the ram to Zeus, who helped his flight, for that he had escaped the plot of his step-mother. And having married Chalciope, daughter of Æetes, king of the Scythians, he begat four sons, Argus, Cytissorus, Melas, and Phrontis. And there he died.—(*Given by Brunck, from an unknown source.*)

THE ROUTE OF THE ARGONAUTS TO ÆA, AND THEIR RETURN THENCE TO IOLCHOS.

There is no particular difficulty in following Argo on her outward voyage, or in identifying the numerous places mentioned by Apollonius along the route; indeed, his knowledge of the geography up to Æa, the goal of the enterprise, is singularly accurate. It is when we attempt to follow his account of the return journey, which was made by a different route, that we find ourselves utterly perplexed, and forced to the conclusion that our author has been drawing purely from imagination, without any idea of the impossibility of the course which he assigns to the heroes.

Briefly, the voyage amounts to this. The Argonauts leave the Pelasgicus Sinus (Gulf of Volo), coast along Thessaly to Thermaicus Sinus (Gulf of Salonica), steer across Ægæum Mare (Archipelago) to the Hellespont (Dardanelles); through this straight into the Propontis (Sea of Mamara); through the Bosporus into the Euxine (Black Sea). Except when they cross the Archipelago, their voyage is almost a coasting one, and is easy to follow on a map.

The return voyage teems with such insurmountable difficulties, and is altogether so hopelessly confused and mythical, that it would be a mere waste of time and patience to attempt to follow it on a modern map

We can only indicate briefly the course the heroes are said to have taken. After crossing the Euxine (Black Sea), they rowed through river-ways right across Dacia, Mœsia, Illyria, and Dalmatia (Bulgaria, Servia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina), into the Adriatic; sailing to Italy, they cross the northern part by the Eridanus (Po); sail into the Rhone, thence into the Mediterranean; right across to the west coast of Italy, along which they pass; through the Lipari islands and the strait of Messina; up the east coast of Italy to the Adriatic again; thence driven by storms, they come to the African coast; being caught in the shoals of the Syrtis they carry Argo overland to lake Tritonis (Bahr Faraouni in Tunis), and finding an outlet into the Mediterranean, sail along the African coast to the coast of Asia Minor, and so into the Ægean homewards.—*(Abridged from Coleridge.)*

INTRODUCTION.

With thee, Phœbus, will I begin and record the famous deeds of those men of old time, who, at the bidding of king Pelias, rowed the good ship Argo past the mouth of the Euxine and through the rocks Cyanean to fetch the Golden Fleece.

For Pelias had heard an oracle on this wise, that in the latter days a hateful doom awaited him, even death, at the prompting of one whom he should see come forth from the people with but one sandal. And not long after, according to the sure report, came Jason on foot across the stream of a swollen torrent, and one sandal did he save from 'neath the mud, but the other left he there sticking in the river-bed. So he came to Pelias forthwith to take a part in the solemn feast, which he was offering to his father Poseidon and the other gods, but to Pelasgian Hera he paid no heed. And the instant Pelias saw Jason, he was ware of him, and made ready to his hurt a grieved task of seamanship, that so he might lose his return in the deep or haply among strange folk.

Now minstrels even before my day do tell how Argus by the counsels of Athene built a ship for him; but mine shall it be now to declare the lineage and name of the heroes, and their passage of the long sea, and all that they did in their wanderings; and may the Muses be the heralds of my song!—(*Apollonius Rhodius.*)

ARGUMENT.

Pelias in alarm, sends Jason to Colchis to fetch the Golden Fleece. So Jason gathers the chieftains, and is chosen captain himself. After launching the Argo they sail on without adventure as far as Lemnos, where they stay awhile, and are hospitably received by Hypsipyle the queen. Thence they come to the Doliones and their king Cyzicus, and are kindly entertained. Giants withstand them at Dindymus, but these are shot by Heracles. On the same night a storm drives the ship back to Cyzicum, and in the darkness they and the Doliones come to blows, and Cyzicus is slain. After mourning for him, they sail on to Mysia, where Hylas is lost, and Heracles, who will not be comforted, is left behind with Polyphe-mus—(*Adapted from the Scholiasts.*)



YE GODS & LITTLE FISHES



TN Thessaly, in olden time, there dwelt
A good king, Æson, whom I've always felt
Was euchred sore, and of his crown bereft,
Though holding ace, and bowers right and left.

But Pelias revoked, in other words
Renigg'd; took all the tricks, and afterwards
Took crown and scepter, also took the cake;
Threw in the throne—himself the king did make.

Of course, such things don't happen in our day;

We merely stock the cards, and win our way.
Or form a trust, or moneyed syndicate—
Buy votes enough to float the ship of state.

But Pelias, now king of Iolchos,
Was sore afraid, and on his bed did toss.
His bed of roses, did this Grecian king,
Find stuffed with thorns, and all that kind of thing—

One reason that he felt so sore afraid—
Another was, an oracle had said:
A man with one sandal would come some day—

And sandal wood was precious—any way,
This man with but one sandal—left one, too;

With pard's skin, russet hood and tunic blue,
Would from the king demand that was his own—

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ND he would from his usurp'd
throne be thrown.

Now, at the foot of old Mount
Pelion,

There dwelt the famous Centaur,
old Chiron;
Half man, half horse, a thorough-
bred was he,

Well-skilled in music, woodcraft, surgery.
And in a cave beneath an old oak tree,
He kept a rural University,
Not subsidized, nor yet endowed, as some—
With a human-equine curriculum.
He taught heroic pupils out-door sports,
The art of war, and also other sorts
Of arts; and artful they became, of course,
From being coached and trained by this "old
horse."

Of many famous scholars I might name,
Who from this truly rural college came,
Were Hercules and Æsculapius,
Well-heeled Achilles; but the one for us
Was Jason, son of Æson, best of all
The young cave-dwellers in old Chiron's stall.
And Chiron did his very level best,
To fit young Jason for his future quest.
And this old Centaur sent our hero brave,
O'er many leagues of stormy ocean's wave,
So well-equipped in all the arts of war,
And love, and seamanship, and sportsman's
lore,
That none could him withstand, this Minyan
bold,

BOOK I.

Who sailed the seas to seize the Fleece of Gold.

And now when Æson's son became of age,
The time arrived when he must soon engage
To verify the oracle foretold

Long years before; and so our warrior bold
Was dressed by Chiron in a tunic blue,
Of Magnesian cut, and a pard's skin too—
Not his "Old Pard's" skin, but a leopard's
pelt—

And two huge spears, and a sword in his belt;
Then with russet hood on his flaxen hair,
He looked too killing, and beyond compare.
Then shaking Chiron's hoof, he said, "Farewell,

FAREWELL, 'old hoss,' my tongue can never tell
How much I grieve to part with you, this day."

But Chiron only hoarsely said,
"Neigh, nay."
(Long after this, upon one summer day,

When Hercules and certain Centaurs gay,
About a jar of wine kicked up a spree,
A poisoned arrow pierced old Chiron's knee—
An arrow poisoned with the Hydra's corse,
For which no cure was known for man or horse.

A constellation he was made by Jove,
And firmly fixed in firmament above.
On any starlit night we yet may spy
This emeritus professor in the sky,



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With bow well drawn and arrow made to
suit,
To teach our young ideas how to shoot.)



O Jason broke away at break
of day,
And thro' the well-known
woods he took his way;
Thro' woods where often he
had chased the stag,
And brought the spotted leopard oft to bag.
Likewise, the boar, who stoutest hearts with-
stood,
He oft bored thro' with spear of cornel wood.
Then, thro' the woods, he came upon the
plain,
Where plain to see his journey would be vain,
Unless across the Anaurus he stood,
Whose rushing, swollen tide bode him no
good.
The river, swollen by the recent rain,
Had overflowed its banks; and then, again,
Huge trees, torn up, mid-stream were whirled
along.
Too deep to wade; the tide to stem, too
strong.
Its tide, if taken at its flood, would be
The death of any mortal man, you see;
And Jason, though a demi-god, 'tis true,
Afraid to risk his mortal half, felt blue.
And time and tide for no man wait, you
know;
But for a woman, yes, be she Juno;

BOOK I.

And this fair goddess, of heaven the queen,
And sweet on Jason, appeared on the scene.
She in the guise of an old woman came;
“Oh, Jay,” she said (the first half of his name—
The mortal half it was, as well we know);
“Oh, son!” (the half divine), “You needs
must go

Across this mighty, rushing stream, my boy;
Fear not, and I will give you safe convoy."

AND thereupon she put her arm 'round
him,
As in she plunged, and both were in the
swim;
The floating trees she quickly turned aside,
And landed safely on the other side.
"You see," she said, "it's not the first, nor
yet"—
And here she took him in out of the wet—
"Nor yet the last time that a man, I'm 'fraid,
Will be supported by a woman's aid."

UHEN Jason shook the water from his eyes,
He gazed in wonder and in mute surprise;
For Juno had assumed her form divine;
Her bright, resplendent beauty 'round did shine.

He shook again, with cold and terror, too,
For in the raging stream he'd lost one shoe.
"Oh, Jason! do not be afraid," she said;
"Though you have lost your shoe, don't lose
your head;



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HIS loss to you will be your greatest gain,
To Pelias 'twill prove to be his bane;
Straight to Iolchos now you fain must go,
And claim from him your rights; it must be so;

For so it has been long ordained, this thing;
And you will some day be the rightful king.
And if you're faithful to your trust, indeed,
You'll always find that I'm your friend, in need.

But now I must be gone, or I'll be missed
By Jove. Good-bye; consider that you're kissed."

When Jason near to old Iolchos drew,
Half-shod, the people smiled and wondered too;
And when the city gates he had passed thro',
They smiled again to see his tunic blue,
His yellow hair, a foot above the crowd,
His brass-bound spears—and then they smiled aloud.

But Jason, with his tall, commanding mien,
Passed swiftly on and noticed not, I ween,
The mean remarks and gibes and sneers of those
Who still admired him in his homespun clothes.

He came at last beside the palace gate,
Where Pelias, the king, himself, in state,
Sat on an ivory throne, clad all in red,
With crown of jeweled gold upon his head.



BOOK I.

Then Jason, followed by the motley crowd,
Strode boldly up, and there in accents loud,
Said: "Pelias, I've come to claim my own,
To claim my father's scepter, crown and
throne;

By having lost one shoe I'm slightly lame,
Still, that does not invalidate my claim,
But only serves to make my title clear,
For I am the one-sandaled man you fear."
And thereupon he came down with both feet
Upon the step below the kingly seat.



When Pelias, dissembling, softly said:
"I know you, Jason, well, but thought you
dead;
Right glad I am to see you here, my boy;
I'll send for Æson, who'll be filled with
joy.
Accept this scepter, crown and everything
That goes to make a man a so-called king.
Right gladly I'll step down and out. The

throne
Is celluloid, not ivory or bone;
The crown is gilt; its jewels are but glass;
It's all a fake; the public is an ass.
The palace needs repair; it's mortgaged, all;
But we'll repair now to the banquet hall."

In princely raiment Jason was arrayed,
A pair of brand new sandals for him made;
His homely, homespun garb he cast aside,
For far from home he soon was doomed to
ride;

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For Pelias was a wily man, and he
Had formed an artful plan, as we shall see,
By subterfuge and wine to outwit Jase,
And send him, eager, on a wild-goose chase.



THEREUPON a regal feast was spread,
A royal function, which I've heard it said
Surpassed all previous efforts, dish for dish;
Confections rare, and fruit, flesh, fowl and fish,
With lavish hand were spread upon the board,
While from tall jars the choicest wines were poured;
And old and crusty, blood-red wine was then
Transfused from skins of goats to skins of men;
And full as goat skins many were that night—
(From which, perhaps, arose the saying, trite).
Enchanting music filled the spacious room,
And garlands rare diffused their sweet perfume.
Of brave adventure, minstrels sung, so sweet;
Fair girls in *danse de ventre* did compete.
And now, when everything was apropos,
And all were merry, mellow, and so, so,
'T was then that Pelias proposed to tell
A tale of olden time, and what befell
The children of the noble Nephele,
Phrixus, her son, and daughter fair, Helle;
How they, unjustly, were condemned to die,
The ire of Queen Ino to gratify.

BOOK I.

But Nephele, the good, discarded queen,
Trumped Ino's trick and won, as will be
seen;
Procured a ram with wings and Fleece of
Gold,
The gift of Neptune, although some do hold
'T was Mercury who brought the buck, in
haste—
But all the same upon its back she placed
Phrixus and Helle both, her children dear.

The ram his course for Colchis straight
did steer;
And scorching thro' the air, his golden trail
Seemed like a bright, effulgent comet's tail.
Poor Helle, in affright, so dazed was she,
Let go her hold and tumbled in the sea;
And since that time, forsooth, all men are
wont
To call that sea, in truth, the Hellespont.
The ram, with Phrixus, then to Colchis came,
Where he in time became a man of fame.
The ram he sacrificed to Jove. The fleece,
A sacred thing, he kept for love of Greece;
Until the king, Æetes, bad but wise,
Had Phrixus slain, and stole the golden prize.
In Colchis still, this wicked king doth hold
"What should belong to us, the Fleece of Gold."

Now this the tale the wily king did tell,
And this the story that he told so well.
To Jason then he spoke in accents low,
And said: "This happened forty years ago;



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Methinks the time has come some Minyan bold
Should from this minion take the Fleece of Gold.
I would that I were young enough to go,
'T would bring such credit on your reign,
you know;
In such a quest the question's one of age,
And I'm too old in such things to engage.
This expedition must be made by sea,
And water never did agree with me.



OU'RE young and brave and strong and handsome, too,
And scores of demigods would go with you,
To share your glorious deeds and lasting fame;
The world would ring with praises of your name.

I'll stay at home, and raise the revenue
To pay off all the debts of state, for you;
And lead a quiet, humdrum, rusty life,
While you're abroad engaged in stirring strife."
Now Jason, flushed with wine and flattery, too,
Was eager for the quest. Right well he knew
The object of the story was to pull
O'er his own eyes, forsooth, this golden wool;
In hopes that going for wool he'd come home shorn,
He knew to be the wish, of Pelias, born.

BOOK I.

Right well did Jason know all this, yet still
He felt that he the mission must fulfill;
Bring back from foreign shore this Golden
Fleece,
Then reign as king of Iolchos, in peace.

He said: "Oh, Pelias, build me a ship,
And I will undertake to make the trip;
Send heralds out thro' all the Grecian land,
For volunteers to join my brave command.
While I'm away you'll still be king; to you
I leave all matters and the revenue;
Be kind and just and keep the coffers full,
But do not raise the tax on foreign wool."

Now, Argus, son of Phrixus, did equip,
And build, with Juno's aid, a mighty ship;
With fifty oars, and mast, and sheets and
sail,

That could with safety ride the fiercest gale.
The stem and figurehead, 'tis truly said,
Of speaking oak of Dodona was made;
The faculty of speech this stem possessed,
And oft advised brave Jason and the rest.
The great ship's hull was gaily painted blue,
Ultramarine, a fine cerulean hue;
The mast and oars and every single spar
Were painted fiery red with cinnabar;
The rudder, still a ruddier tint, I'm told.
The figurehead was overlaid with gold;
Likewise the gunwales and the portholes, too,
And the starboard-holes, where the oars went
through,

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LL these were rimmed with gold
some carats fine,
Which brightly in the morning sun
did shine.

The good ship to her anchor
riding free,
As graceful as a swan upon the
sea,

Was finished now, and fully found, I ween,
The most complete equipment ever seen:
Two banks of oars, a tiller stout and long,
A huge square sail with sheets and braces
strong;

The spacious hold and lockers all were stored
With food and wine; the best was put aboard.
And nothing now was lacking but the crew;
And but one thing remained for him to do,
So Jason named her Argo, which was quite
An honor to Argus, the great shipwright;
A cup of Thracian wine poured on her prow,
Her sponsor, Juno, and godmother, now.

Next day there came a score of men to
town,
Brave heroes they, and men of great renown;
And they were followed, day by day, until
Full sixty god-like warriors did fill
The shipping list; all men of daring, too;
All eager for the quest—a noble crew.
From far and near these warriors came in
haste;
To answer Jason's call, no time did waste.
And all were famous demigods, you see,
The very flower of Grecian chivalry.

BOOK I.



FIRST Orpheus, the great musician,
came,
Who with his lyre had made a last-
ing name;
'T is said he played so well that
rocks and trees
Broke from their bonds and followed
him with ease;

(But we have seen the same, where clubs and
stones,

In our own day, have followed dulcet tones
Emitted from some strolling German band.)
To Hades once he took his lyre in hand,
To fetch his wife, Eurydice, from there
(The place where all good liars do repair);
But looking backward, lost his wife, so dear;
Brought back his lyre to earth—it still is here.

Anon there came Asterion. Then we
Have Nauplius, whose tears made salt the
sea;

Erginus, swift of foot, and gray-haired, too,
Though young in years as any in the crew;
Both sons of Neptune. And then after these,
One Polyphemus, friend of Hercules;
Not one-eyed Pol., by Ulysses made blind,
But Pol. who fought the Centaurs, drunk,
you mind.

Then came two other friends within the
hour—

Bold Theseus, who slew the Minotaur,
And Pirithous, gallant forest king; —
Some doubt they went, but some doubt every-
thing.



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THEN came the prophet Idmon,
though he knew
He'd lose his life, as well as Ti-
phys, too.

Diana sent her best loved, chosen friend;
In answer to the summons, did command
Fair Atalanta, swiftest runner, too,
And only woman in the Argo's crew;
But she could hold her own in fight or chase,
With any man; she was not commonplace;
Perhaps new woman you would call her now,
If you knew woman, that I might allow;
But in our day, I think you will admit
Miss Atalanta would be called misfit.

Oileus, the red-haired Locrian king,
Next came to town, well armed with every-
thing.

Then Iphiclus, the cow-boy, who, we'll own,
Drank iron rust to give him nerve and tone.

Admetus, king of Pheræ, got the word;
Whose herd Apollo tended once, we've heard.
Two sons of Mercury, who'd left their farms,
In Jason's cause resolved to take up arms—
Echion and his brother, Eurytus.

Then came the unsexed woman, Cæneus,
Whom Neptune changed, we read, from
woman, fair,
To man, with all her rights and some to
spare.

Then came another prophet, Mopsus; he
Was also skilled in ornithology.

Æthalides was herald of the crew
(Echion was another herald, too);

BOOK I.

Eurydamus, an oarsman known to fame;
Mencetius, son of Actor, also came.

Eurytion, and then Eribotes,
Were seen approaching thro' the forest trees.
Then next came Clytius and Iphitus,
Both gallant sons of old man Eurytus,
And both were mighty bowmen, for you
know
They claimed to be inventors of the bow.

And then a gilded chariot to the town
Bore two brave men of wisdom and renown,
The brothers Peleus and Telamon;
And bold Phalerus followed closely on.
Then Butes, who for beauties had an eye,
And weakness for the weaker sex, came nigh.

The helmsman, Tiphys, pilot of the ship,
By Juno was induced to make the trip;
No man more skillful in his way than he,
Well versed in signs of air and sky and sea.
Next, Phlias, son of Bacchus, joined the crew;
His vineyards left to sail the ocean blue.

Then came the King of Clubs, great
Hercules,
To brave the terrors of the unknown seas;
As he approached with club and lion's skin,
Great was the shout, vociferous the din
That rent the air; and Jason paid the rent,
And Hercules invited to his tent.
Of his twelve labors great we all have heard,
And when and where and how they all oc-
curred;
Labors most capital; the greatest known;
But Capital such Labor could not own.



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ITH Hercules there came his trusty
squire,
The fair and faithful Hylas, whose
fond sire,
Theodamas, had given him leave
to go,
To bear the giant's arrows and
his bow;

No braver lad in Greece than Hylas, Esq.,
Not only brave, but fair and picturesque.

Two heroes, world-renowned from east
to west,

Next morning early came to join the quest,
Both Castor and his brother, Pollux; they
Were twins, and sons of Leda, and they say,
I swan! that Jove himself was e'en their sire,
And on these cygnets set his signet, fire;
By Gemini, they still are known; in fine,
A constellation bright they nightly shine;
And Pollux was the champion pugilist,
No man could stand before his awful fist;
Jim Corbett, Sharkey or the long-armed Fitz,
Would be no more to him than three tomtits.
And Castor was the champion charioteer,
Well known on Grecian turf; the chanticleer—
Cock of the walk—in all athletic sports;
Took all the prizes in games of all sorts.

Then Lynceus and Idas I must name,
Two brothers who from fair Messene came;
Lynceus was the lookout of the ship,
And nothing his observant gaze could slip;
In earth, or waters underneath, could be
No thing too small for Lynceus to see.

BOOK I.



HEN Periclymenes, who had the power
To change his shape or form,
from hour to hour;

No doubt a Minyan politician, he,
And shaped his ends to suit *vox populi*.
Ancæus, lover of the ocean blue,
A skillful sailor and good helmsman, too.

Then from Arcadian forests, fair and green,
Amphidamus and Cepheus are seen.
The cow-boy, Augeas, from his cattle ranch,
A man of val'rous deeds and warrior staunch.
Asterius and Amphion, both brave,
Came next to join the quest by ocean wave.

Then followed one, so fleet of foot was he,
That dry shod he could run upon the sea;
Euphemus was his name, he beat the earth,
And water too, for all his feet were worth.

From Calydon there next arrived that day
The valiant Meleager, whom, they say,
Was second best to no man of the force
(But Hercules we must except, of course).
His uncle, too, the brave Laocoön,
Was eager for the laurels to be won;
Another uncle, also, Iphiclus—
The second of that name it seems to us.

Just here I'll say what may be known to you,
A duplicate Ancæus joined the crew.
Upon investigation it was found
There were not names enough to go around;



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



MALL, common names were
rife, and did increase,
But big, hard names were rather
scarce in Greece;
A nose by any other name would
smell—
But Jim for Jason would not do
so well.

Then Palæmonius, son of
Lernus, came,
And in good time, for he was slightly lame.
The mighty hunter, Arcas, then came in,
His well-filled quiver made of leopard's skin.

Now, with a mighty, rushing, curious
sound,
Flew through the air and lit upon the ground
Two brothers, sons of Boreas, the bold—
Zeta and Calais, whom, we're told,
Could fly at will, or fly at anything,
For to each heel there was affixed a wing;
Some say the wings were on their heads—
the fools!—

Had that been so these brothers had been
mules;
In either case I think we'll not deny
What seems more certain—they were very fly.

Asclepius, a surgeon of great skill,
Then next arrived, to either cure or kill;
No allopath or homœopath was he,
From Chiron he got his degree, M.D.;
And Chiron, being more than one-half horse,
Was versed in spavin, ringbone, and, of
course,

BOOK I.

He treated these as well as human ills,
And taught his students how to make horse
pills;

The practice in his hos'pital, you see,
To some extent was vet-er-i-na-ry.

The son of Pelias, the king, you know,
Acastus, then expressed his wish to go.
And Neleus, though growing old and gray,
Was not content, alone, at home to stay;
For Periclymenes and Nestor, too,
And they were both his sons, had joined the
crew.

Almenus, son of Mars, was next to come.
Laertes, too, from Ithaca, his home.
Two sons of Bias, both of whom were game,
Areius and Talaus, also came.
Then Canthus, from Eubœa, slim and tall;
And mighty Leodocus last of all.

Perhaps there's some whom I've forgot
to name,
Some village champion, though unknown to
fame;
And some I've named, perhaps, it did not
suit
To go, and therefore sent a substitute.
As this occurred so many years ago,
Some names have been forgotten, that I know;
And some there were who never learned to
write,
But signed the roll with "X, his mark," all
right;
And in this way these men of mark expressed
Their firm and strong desire to join the quest.

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

And I am very sorry—might say vexed—
That but an X was for such names annexed;
For doubtless they were brave and gallant
men,
And may have fought and bled and died; but
then—
Were, lacking friends with pull and cinch at
court,
Not named in the official report.



That night, was spread upon the board, a
feast;
And all the heroes from the first to least,
And guests of honor, men of high renown,
And dignitaries of the far-famed town,
Were all assembled 'round the festive board,
And held high wassail; all with one accord,
To celebrate with joy the great event,
And give a glorious send-off—wise intent—
To sixty godlike heroes, who were bound
To fleece that Golden Fleece wherever found,
And bring it back to Thessaly, a full
Yard wide, and warranted to be all wool.

BOOK I.

And so they held high wassail, as I've told;
Though some drank more than mortal man could hold;
The stomach of the godlike man, you see,
Was wassail-proof, of high or low degree.
The great promoter of the quest was there,
The wily king, who spoke and sawed the air
With frantic gestures, with his royal arms,
The glories to enhance, and the alarms
Of any thought of danger to dispel.
And boodle politicians wished them well.
And government contractors, on the make,
Who furnished commissaries, for the sake
Of Grecian glory and renown, they said;
But public honor then, as now, was dead;
In olden time, the same as in our day,
Contract supplies—enlarge the bills—their way.
So these contractors, with their pockets filled,
Cried "*Bon voyage;*" cared not if all were killed.

THE banquet, though, was voted a success,
And all enjoyed the function, more or less;
With mirth and music, song and speech and wine,
They filled the long, dark watches, I opine;
So, all night long they quaffed the wassail cup,
And at the break of day were all broke up—
The banquet, not the wassail cup, I mean—
As soon as Sol appeared upon the scene;



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

As he emerged and mounted in the sky,
It seemed as though he winked his other eye;
The reason, though, is very plain to me,
'T was water in his eye from out the sea;
At boozy men he'd scarcely deign to wink,
When he himself had just come out the drink.

EXT morning, on the sun-
lit, curving strand
Of Pagasæ, the harbor
bay, did stand
The populace of Iolchos,
to view



The proud ship Argo and her famous crew.
Right bravely rode the gay and gallant ship,
And tugged the twisted cable she would slip,
And spread her wings to catch the western
breeze,

And sail away to lands beyond the seas.

An altar then was built upon the shore,
Of stones and shingle from the beach; and
o'er

It all were placed the olive logs, well dried;
A blazing brand of fir was then applied.
Two steers were slaughtered for the sacrifice
To Neptune or Apollo; I'm not wise
Enough to say to which of these two gods
The offering was made, but by all odds
It was the greatest barbecue, I've heard,
That ever in Thessalian land occurred.

The king was there and cast the barley
meal,

And Jason poured libations, pure, to seal
The compact he and all the others made,

BOOK I.

To leave the Grecian border on this raid,
And not return until their hands did hold
That sacred thing to Greece, the Fleece of
Gold.

The flames leaped high; and upward,
wreaths of smoke
Ascended, happy omen, to invoke
The aid of Neptune or Apollo; and
The roast beef gravy mingled with the sand.

And sand and grit these warriors possessed
To sail their galley east, or galley west;
But toward the east to sail to Colchis land,
It was their fixed intent, you understand;
No altar now could alter this decree,
To steer due east across the Euxine sea;
No sacrificial ox could circumvent,
Or change their course from east to occident.
But hap'ly all the signs and omens too,
Implied success and honor to the crew.

THE heroes now were all aboard the
ship,

And casting lots for places on the trip.
The middle bench of upper bank of oars
(For on the ship there were two decks or
floors)

Was then by common will of all assigned
To Hercules and Ancaeus; a kind
Of place of honor, also one of rank;
Their mighty strokes were tellers in that bank.
And in the second bank, the middle seat
Was giv'n to Atalanta, who was sweet
On Meleager, sitting by her side;
And thus for months contented they did ride,



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

Or rather, rowed, the galley toward the east;
Their bank account was good, to say the least.



THE helm was given to Tiphys,
who could steer
By day or night, in weather
foul or clear;
The tiller ropes were his,
with one accord,
Until her ropes and spars
went by the board.

And Lynceus, the lookout, then was named;
For periscopic vision he was famed;
As lookout all the others looked to him,
To see that safely rode their vessel trim.

Then Jason was elected Captain bold,
And all the rest were mates, so I've been told;
They could not go before the mast, you'll find,
For that was near the middle; so behind
The mast one-half the crew were thus com-
pelled

To sit, as they the gallant bark propelled.
With fifty oars through fifty holes, was she,
A wholly holy terror of the sea.

And now the cables were drawn in and
coiled;
The anchor raised and fished; the crew all
toiled

In getting under way; then to his oar
Each warrior went, and looking toward the
shore,
Gave three loud cheers in old vociferous
Greek,

As went the Grecian banner to the peak.

BOOK I.

The folk on shore responded with a will;
Responsive echoes came from every hill;
And from the top of tall Mount Pelion
The good old Centaur Chiron looked upon
The stirring scene below, and breathed a
prayer
For Jason's safe return, his only care.

And all the gods and woodland nymphs
looked down,
To see these men of courage and renown;
The Tritons and the nymphs, Nereides,
Were looking on in wonder, from the seas;
And as they looked, admired, for truth to
say,
They'd ne'er before seen such a grand array
Of handsome, strong, and well-armed men;
in fine,

Each man was one-half human, half divine.
THEN Tiphys grasped the tiller
with his hand,
And fifty oars gave way at his
command;
With measured strokes the feathered oars
kept time
To voice and lyre of Orpheus, sublime,
Who played and sung of war and doughty
deeds
That, doughty then, are doubted now, for
creeds
Of olden time are looked upon to-day
As fairy tales or fables, sad to say.



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



ND Jason, standing in the stern,
a-lee,
Then poured a cup of mead upon
the sea;
And fishes followed in the gal-
ley's wake,
Great tunnies, dolphins, mullet,
cod and hake,
Enchanted by the lyre of Or-

pheus—

It might have been the mead, it seems to us—
But lyres and fishes, ever since that day,
Are strangely coupled, but this way—
The liars follow fishes—lie in wait,
And then, when caught, again they lie in
weight.

Thus Argo left her moorings in the bay,
And cleft the sun-kissed waves, as on her way
She dashed the spray on either side the prow,
And proudly glided o'er the sea; and now
The Argonauts, responsive to the skill
Of helmsman Tiphys, labored with a will,
And turned the harbor headland with a dash,
That seemed to those on shore to be a flash
Of vivid lightning, as the morning sun
On burnished shields and weapons brightly
shone;

The glare from highly polished helmet scales,
And gilded figurehead and gilded wales,
Reflected by the rays of bright sunlight,
Seemed like a meteor as she passed from sight.

The folk on shore then slowly took their
way

BOOK I.

Back toward the city gates, a sad array
Of weeping maidens, who with every tear
Breathed silent prayers for those they held so
dear;
And sad-browed men, and heart-sick mothers
too,
Besought the gods to guard the val'rous
crew.

But Pelias, the king, with joy was filled,
And hoped and prayed that Jason would be
killed;
And with pretended grief upon his face,
The tenor of his inmost thoughts was base.

Now Neptune showed his favor for the
crew,
And raised the wind in their behalf; 't is true
A fresh and merry, wholesail, western breeze
Came piping off the shore across the seas;
The rowers, at command of Tiphys, then
Laid by their oars, and like good sailor men,
Unfurled and hoisted up and spread the sail,
And trimmed it flat to catch the gentle gale.
The Argo like a sea bird fairly flew
With widespread wing across the waters blue;
And like a sea bird dipped her outstretched
wing,
And from her prow in showers the spray did
fling.

Then Orpheus tuned up his lyre and sung
An old sea ballad, learned when he was
young.
He sung of Saturn, mighty Titan, who
With murderous intent a sickle drew,

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

And slashed his father, Uranos, whose blood
Dropped in the sea, and from the salty flood
Arose fair Venus, born of blood which fell
Upon the ocean wave; so blood will tell.
And Saturn was the famous sire, 't is said,
Of Centaur Chiron, blooded thoroughbred.



E also sang of Bacchus, who,
he told,

Was captured by Tyrsenian
pirates bold;
Was bound with cords and
taken on their ship;

But from his godlike limbs the cords did slip;
And vines of grape and ivy climbed the mast—
The captain wild with rage, the men aghast—
And grapes and berries hung in clusters fair
From shrouds and stays and spars and every-
where;

And Bacchus, turning to a lion, then,
Devoured the captain; and the men,
With terror filled, plunged headlong in the sea,
And there were turned to dolphins, all agree.
If any doubt this story told the crew,

The dolphins still exist to prove it true.

In point of fact, these fish that very day,
Charmed by the lyre of Orpheus and his lay,
Close to the Argo swam, with crested jaws,
And flapped their tails in token of applause.

Now past the Pelian cliffs the Argo sped,
The Sepian headland now in sight, ahead;
This was the place where Thetis, by her
wish,

& Did change herself into a cuttle-fish,

BOOK I.

And various other forms, as fast she fled
From Peleus, who wanted her to wed;
Till, tired of change of form, she changed her
mind,

And married him; to this he was inclined
By Centaur Chiron's sage advice, though she,
A lovely water nymph, lived in the sea.
They had one son, Achilles, who was now
With Chiron on the lofty mountain brow;
And Peleus was now an Argonaut,
And in the sea dwells Thetis, as she ought.

These songs were much enjoyed by all
the crew,

Because, you see, they'd nothing else to do;
While Meleager, though a warrior grim,
Held Atalanta's hand; she winked at him.
And Sepias now astern, they saw the isle
Sciathus, on their weather bow; and while
They looked upon the mainland, there they
saw

The headland of Magnesia; then a flaw
Of fresher breeze the Argo caused to list
To starboard, while the rising waves she
kissed.

The cairn of Dolops now was in plain view,
Which soon was reached, and then the Argo's
crew

The broad sail lowered and furled it on the
yard;

Then took their oars and rowed both fast and
hard,

Until they beached the Argo on the sand;
Right glad were they again to tread the land.



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



ERE Jason camped and rested
two long days.

The heroes passed the time in
various ways—

In wrestling matches, racing,
feats of strength,

In quoits and boxing, swim-
ming—till at length

A fair and fresh wind blowing
off the land,

They pushed the Argo seaward from the
strand,

And making sail, their goodly vessel flew,
Right glad again to breast the waters blue.

And sailing on and on, at length observed
The city Melibœa as they swerved;

Then Homele and other mountains tall—
Olympus, Ossa; higher than them all.

The Thracian hill of Athos, as they passed,
Half way to Hellespont its shadow cast.

And strong and stronger blew the breeze,
and soon

The sheets and halyards sung a merry
tune;

The huge sail filled and bellied to the blast,
And strained and creaked upon the bended
mast;

But Tiphys eased the Argo o'er the seas,
Till with the sun went down the western
breeze.

The heroes then, with oars again in hand,
And rowing swiftly toward the rock-crowned
land,

BOOK I.

At nightfall anchored safely in the lee
Of Lemnos isle, far out upon the sea.

Now in this isle the women held full sway,
And woman's rights the order of the day;
The women held all offices, from queen
To supervisor of the roads, I ween;
And all the Lemnian soldiers, rank and file,
Wore bifurcated skirts; for on this isle
No man had been allowed to live for years;
No man or boy; for strange it now appears,
The females slit the throat of every male,
Till not a man was left to tell the tale.

It seems that on this pleasant, sea-girt isle,
Where every prospect pleases, man was vile;
Unfaithful to their lawful wedded wives,
They led concupiscent and evil lives,
And frequented the Thracian mainland, where
They flirted with the women over there.
We read that Venus, for some fancied slight,
Caused all this trouble dire—it may be right.
But every husband gave this same excuse,
Which to the classic reader may be news:
His wife was fond of onions, musk and myrrh,
So that he could not bear the smell of her,
And roamed away to other pastures new,
And sweeter smelling fragance—so would
you.

All ready for an early start next day,
The crew were busy getting under way,
When from the shore they heard such noise
and din,
They stopped, and ceased to haul the anchor
in;

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

And looking shoreward, were surprised to see
A band of warlike female soldiery,
Well armed, and with their fighting harness
on,

Each woman seemed a mighty Amazon;
They clashed their swords and shields with
warlike will,
But woman's usual weapon—tongue—was
still;

And at their head Hypsipyle, their queen,
Stood gazing, proud defiance in her mien.

Then Jason sent Æthalides, for he
Was herald of the ship's good company,
To ask what meant this warlike, fierce array,
When he was just about to sail away;
To tell, moreover, Queen Hypsipyle
The object of his mission o'er the sea.



ER fears removed, the queen
then did implore
That Jason and his crew
would come ashore
And be her guests, with all
that did imply;

He guessed they would be

happy to comply.

She sent a formal invitation then
To Jason and his crew of gallant men,
To meet the ladies of her court at tea,
And signed her maiden name: R. S. V. P.

Æthalides returned and made report;
The heroes voted to remain in port;
Accepted was the invitation, too,
By every warrior of the Argo's crew,

BOOK I.

Except great Hercules, his squire, Hylas,
And Meleager, and the warrior lass,
Fair Atalanta; they would not consent
To meet these ladies of strong minds and
scent.

In justice, though, it seems but right to say,
Their ill smell with their husbands passed
away;
And then the simple truth confronts us, too,
That they were sweet—on Jason and his crew.

And now each sailor overhauled his kit,
Picked out his gear of most becoming fit;
His broidered robe of gorgeous woof and hue,
His jeweled belt, and burnished it anew;
And Orpheus polished well his tuneful lyre;
To look his very best did each aspire.
And when they left the ship toward close of
day,
They looked like gods, indeed, as on their
way
They marched in solid ranks with martial
tread,
With Jason, noble hero, at their head;
And solid they became with maidens fair
Of Lemnos isle—but that's not our affair.

At court the queen received them, one
and all;
Assigned to each a seat in banquet hall
Beside a lady of the court, but she
Had Jason sit beside herself, you see

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

They had a lovely time, as each one said,
For never in that isle was such a spread;
The choicest viands, wines and mead were
there;
While song and speech and story filled the
air;

A feast of reason, surely, for the queen
Had reason for the feast, as may be seen;
And then the flow of soul, or overflow,
Was most enjoyed, perhaps, as you may know


HE queen, dissembling, then
with cunning speech,
Said: "You, perhaps, have
wondered at this breach
Of etiquette, in asking you to
tea,

With only wives and maidens, as you see;
Perhaps you've wondered, also, at the dearth
Of men and boys in this fair spot of earth.
Know then that they, the lords of Lemnos
isle,

Oft leave their wives and daughters for awhile,
And to the mainland one and all repair,
Allured by charms of pretty maidens there;
And *personae non gratae* we are now,
Deserted and neglected, you'll allow.

But now for woman's rights we all de-
clare;

We've banished all the males, 't is only fair
And right; in other words, we've cut them,
dead,

And we strong-minded women rule instead.

BOOK I.

We think we live much better, on the whole,
Since every woman now is *femme-sole*;
For in our courts the married ones, of course,
Obtained decrees of absolute divorce.

We bought a pair of Justice scales, and then
We weighed the thoughts and actions of our
men;
Weighed in the balance thus, from day to day,
We found that all were wanton, in their
weigh.

We've notified our husbands, so 'tis clear
They'll never more come back to interfere."

And thus the time was spent from day to
day,

In dinner parties, teas and picnics gay;
The heroes well content to stay on land,
Till Hercules felt called to take a hand;
With club and lion's skin he went on shore,
And with his comrades talked the matter o'er.

"If Jason wishes to remain," said he,
"The Jack of Hearts to Queen Hypsipyle,
Then I, the King of Clubs, will take the trick,
And steer our gallant ship through thin and
thick.

Fair Atalanta, Meleager bold
And I will try to seize the Fleece of Gold;
For we stand pat; we know three of a kind
Is good enough to see and raise your blind.
You think your royal flush is sure to win;
You'll find it but a bob-tail, sure as sin.
We're good enough to open, and will take
The jack-pot, with the Fleece of Gold—the
stake."



YE GODS & LITTLE FISHES



HE heroes, much ashamed at this reproof,
Resolved to leave at once the royal roof;
By Jason led, they bid a fond farewell
To queen, and ladies of the court, as well.

In solid phalanx then they formed once more,
And marched with heavy footsteps to the shore;
Their spears and shields adorned with flowers rare,
And other tokens from the Lemnian fair,
Who weeping sadly, said, with tearful voice:
"Again we're widows lone, but not from choice."

Then all the heroes went aboard the ship;
The cable from the stern did Argus slip
From round a rock; and then the Argo's crew
Hove up the anchor stone, and fished it, too;
Then took their places at the oars, and soon
Were swiftly rowing to a measured tune:
"The Girl I Left Behind Me," done in Greek,
An ode they owed to Lemnos, so to speak.

That day they reached the island Samothrace;
There was a sacred temple in this place;
And secret rites were practiced by the crew,
Which right or wrong, I can't reveal to you.
They left next day and seemed a trifle tired,
Though what the reason was, I've not inquired;

BOOK I.

But Orpheus, who'd been there once before,
And knew the grips and passwords—smiled
the more.

The south wind then began to blow quite
hard;

They raised the sail and spread it on the
yard,
And sailing thence o'er the Ægean sea,
The Hellespont they entered with great glee;
For now good fishing they were sure to find,
And soon their lines were trolling out behind.

And Atalanta, to their great surprise,
The first fish caught, a tunny of some size;
Hand over hand she hauled it o'er the stern,
The coarse line made her little fingers burn;
But with some pride she brought it in with
ease.

"He'll weigh a stone or more," said Hercules;
"He'll weigh the anchor stone, you mean,"
she said,

And whirled her line three times around her
head,

Then cast it far to leeward; strange to say,
Another fish she caught; it was her day;
Another tunny, flapping fins and tail,
As Atalanta drew it o'er the rail;
This one so big she had to use the gaff.
"He'll weigh a tunny more," she said, "now
laugh!"

They wondered all to see the luck she had;
A full round dozen, dolphins too, egad!
The others fishing by her side, alas!
Got ne'er a bite—and thus it came to pass:

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



HILE all the crew at Lemnos
were away,
Fair Atalanta watched the fishes
play
About the ship. One day a bit
of brass
Fell overboard; a great fish made
a pass

And seized it ere it sunk—a happy thought:
Then Atalanta took an armor scale,
In one end drilled a hole with sharpened nail;
With constant rubbing made it shine quite
bright,
Then fixed it just above the hook, aright;
The line passed through the little hole, you see,
And round the hook it whirled quite merrily.
And this the lure evolved from woman's
mind,
The first revolving fish-bait of its kind;
And thus you see—you'll not forget it soon—
A woman did invent the trolling spoon.
The proof is this: that I, myself, one day—
Near where Leander swam across the bay—
Picked up a sea-worn, spoon-shaped scale of
brass,
With letter "A" scratched on one side; alas!
Poor Atalanta lost it all too soon;
Her loss, my gain, for now this souvenir spoon,
And well preserved, may still be gazed upon,
Though one thing still it lacks—the hole is
gone;
The letter alpha's there, graved on the bowl;
In fact, there's nothing missing but the hole.

BOOK I.

THE wind blew fresh and fair; the weather
bright;

Ancæus steered the ship by day; at night
The helmsman Tiphys, with his sight so keen,
The tiller held; and so they sailed between
The land of Ida on the starboard side,
Rhoeteum on the port; and on the tide
Passed Abydos and Abarnis; at last
From Hellespont to the Propontis passed,
And came to Cyzicum, a harbor fair;
And by advice of Tiphys anchored there.
'T was here they got a heavier anchor stone,
And tautened shrouds and stays, which all
must own

Was a most wise and thoughtful thing to do,
For men about to sail in waters new.

Beyond the harbor, and the river, too,
A lofty, rugged hill stood in plain view;
And on this hill a wild and lawless race
Of earth-born men did dwell, both big and
base;

Each giant had six arms, as we are told,
A full half dozen weapons thus could hold;
With bows of cornel wood we must aver,
The first six-shooters in the world, they were.

The peaceful people of the harbor town,
The Doliones, men of good renown,
And ruled by Cyzicus, the youthful king,
A welcome warm, and food and drink did
bring

To Jason and the rest. It seems the king,
By Juno, had been warned to do this thing;

YE GODS &
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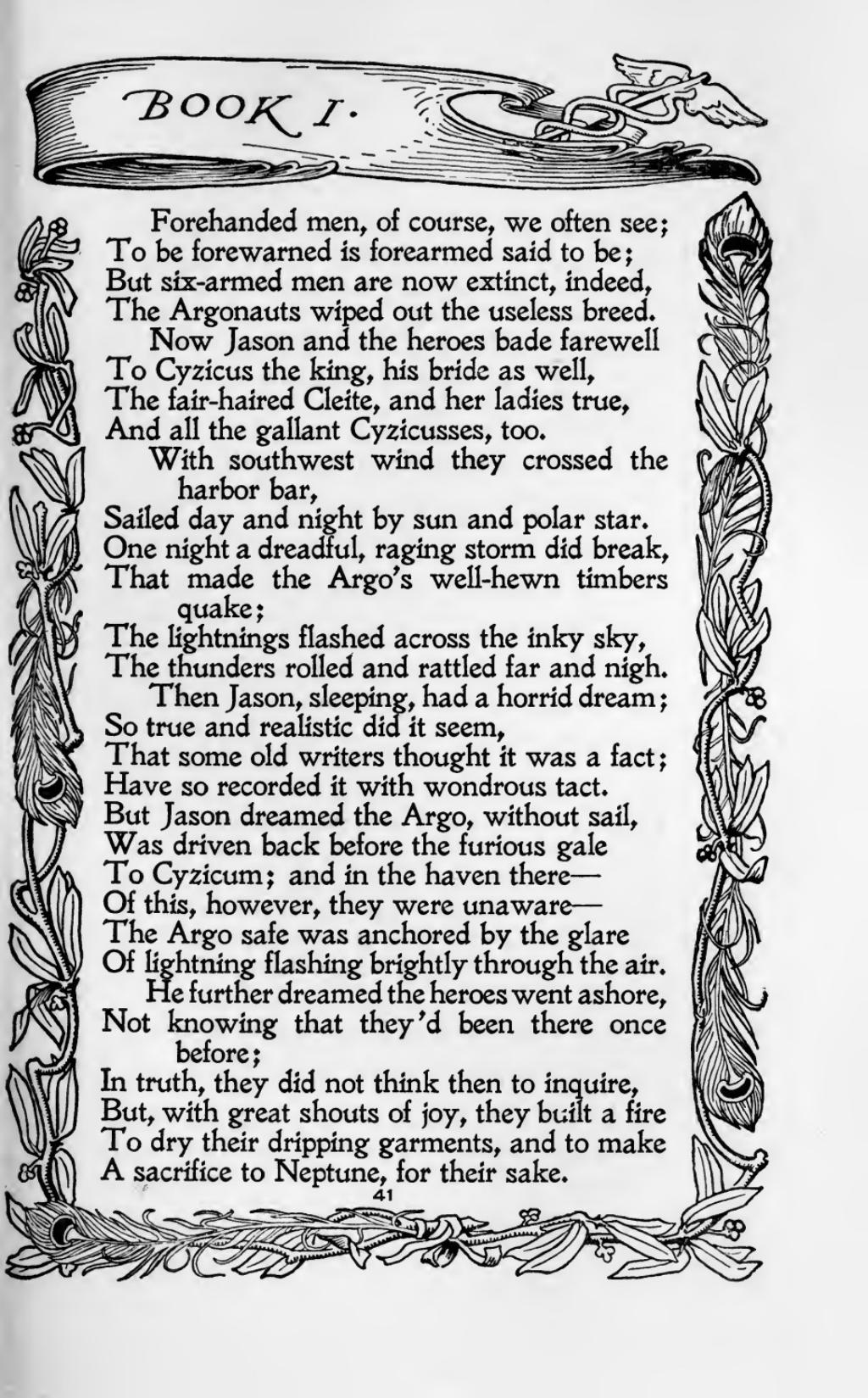
To give good cheer and welcome to the crew;
And this the generous king proposed to do;
In fact, he gave the best, spared no expense,
To please his famous guests, in every sense.
Receptions, dinner parties, breakfasts rare,
Were also given by the ladies fair
Of Dolonian society,
To Jason and the Grecian chivalry;
For at the banquet in the royal hall,
The object of the quest was told to all.



EXT morning Jason, Tiphys
and a score
Of Argonauts, went inland
to explore,
And climb the mountain
Dindymus, to see

The route their voyage led them o'er the sea.
The earth-born giants then from Arctos hill,
With rocks the seaward channel tried to fill,
And pen the Argo, like a rat, inside,
The sport of wind and wave and every tide.

Then Hercules, who had remained behind,
Had sport exactly suited to his mind;
And with his mighty arm and bended bow,
With every arrow laid a giant low;
His arrows gone he took his brazen club;
The others joined him, in the fierce hubbub,
With sword and spear, and soon they won
the day,
And every six-armed man had passed away.
Instead of passing rocks to impede ships,
It kept them busy passing in their chips.



BOOK I.

Forehanded men, of course, we often see;
To be forewarned is forearmed said to be;
But six-armed men are now extinct, indeed,
The Argonauts wiped out the useless breed.

Now Jason and the heroes bade farewell
To Cyzicus the king, his bride as well,
The fair-haired Cleite, and her ladies true,
And all the gallant Cyzicusses, too.

With southwest wind they crossed the harbor bar,
Sailed day and night by sun and polar star.
One night a dreadful, raging storm did break,
That made the Argo's well-hewn timbers quake;
The lightnings flashed across the inky sky,
The thunders rolled and rattled far and nigh.

Then Jason, sleeping, had a horrid dream;
So true and realistic did it seem,
That some old writers thought it was a fact;
Have so recorded it with wondrous tact.
But Jason dreamed the Argo, without sail,
Was driven back before the furious gale
To Cyzicum; and in the haven there—
Of this, however, they were unaware—
The Argo safe was anchored by the glare
Of lightning flashing brightly through the air.

He further dreamed the heroes went ashore,
Not knowing that they'd been there once before;

In truth, they did not think then to inquire,
But, with great shouts of joy, they built a fire
To dry their dripping garments, and to make
A sacrifice to Neptune, for their sake.

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



HE Doliones woke with dread
and fright,
And in the darkness of the horrid
night,
Put on their fighting harness,
seized their arms,
Rushed out to know the cause
of these alarms;

And seeing men about a fire bright,
And arms and armor flashing in its light,
Thought that their foes had come with fire to
burn
And sack their city. Then each man in turn
Let fly his arrow; then with shield and spear,
Rushed all together, without thought of fear,
Upon the Argonauts, who much surprised—
Not knowing they were friends they highly
prized—
Gave blow for blow; and fierce the battle
raged,
Until the Argonauts became enraged
And drove the Doliones back to town;
And sad to say, a score of men went down
Before their spears. At last, at break of day,
It was discovered then to their dismay,
That they had fought their friends. The sad-
dest thing—
Among the dead was Cyzicus, the king.
Then Jason woke; his mind was much
relieved
To find it all a dream, which, he believed,
Had really happened; and the storm now o'er,
The Argo sailed along the peaceful shore.

BOOK I.

A crested bird then flew above the mast,
And perched upon the high-peaked stern, at
last;

A loud and cheery, joyous, trilling note
Then issued from its swelling, azure throat;
It was a brave king-fisher, halcyon bird,
That came to bring the tired sailors word,
That now from storms for weeks they would
be free,

With summer weather and a rippling sea.

And now a calm succeeded to the gale;
Each rower took his oar and did not fail
To do his very level best; for both
The first and second banks, of course, were
loath

To be outdone; and port and starboard, too,
Did try each other's mettle to outdo.

Then Hercules put forth his mighty
strength,
And would have turned the ship around, at
length,
But suddenly his great oar broke in half,
And back he tumbled from the bench; the
laugh
Was then on him; but turning to the rest,
Said: "Who laughs last will always laugh
the best."

The broken oar he spliced with leather
braid,
And trimming down the broad and flattened
blade,
He made a fishing rod some ten yards long,
Much like a flag-staff, trim and very strong;



YE GODS & LITTLE FISHES

With leather loops tied on the rod and tip,
Through which, as guides, the fishing line
would slip.



ITH two round shields, and
spindles in between,
He made an object none
had ever seen;
The central shaft extended
through a hole

Bored through the butt of his big fishing pole;
With handle near the edge of outer rim,
It freely turned; he said it suited him.

The signal halyards for a line he took;
And from a rod of brass he made a hook.
Such fishing tackle none had ever seen;
The rod and reel were something new I ween;
The very first that ever had been known,
And Hercules invented both, we'll own.
And then he took a strip of lion's pelt,
Some silken bits from Atalanta's belt,
A plume from Jason's helmet, who was nigh;
With these he tied an artificial fly.

Then Hercules addressed the crew and
said:

"Fair Atalanta as high-hook's ahead;
She beat us all a-fishing with her spoon,
But I expect to take her laurels soon.
I've thought about this thing from day to day,
And when I broke my oar, I saw my way.

One day, while idly looking on the sea,
I saw some big fish feeding, on the lee;
A school of sprats was floating with the tide,
On them the fish were feeding, side by side;

BOOK I.

And then a tern, attracted by the prey,
Swooped down and mingled in the fishy fray;
A fish then lifted up his ponderous jaw,
Took in the tern, and that's the last I saw.
Now, one good tern deserves another, sure;
So I have made this artificial lure,
Well calculated to deceive, you'll learn;
You call it what you will—I'll call the tern."

Then Hercules began to cast his fly,
With all the others standing idly by;
His ponderous rod he waved both back and
forth,

The heavy line did follow, south, then north;
The fly in air, and then in water, too,
As first in front, and then behind it flew;
Each cast he made was longer than before,
Until the fly reached half way to the shore.

And now the rest began to smile and
laugh,

The bolder ones, indeed, began to chaff:
"I'd spare the rod and use a trolling line,"
Said Atalanta, "and I'll lend you mine."
"Just look," said Meleager, "how he reels
About the quarter-deck, with those big wheels."
"I've noticed that," said Polyphemus, "too;
I think he's got wheels in his head; don't
you?"

"He seems to have a cast in either eye,"
Said fleet Euphemus, walking quickly by.
"I think he'd better take a tern below,"
Said Periclymenes, and turned to go.



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



E'S teaching swallows how to
use their wings,"
Said Iphiclus; and others said
these things:

"One swallow never made a
summer yet."
"But this a cold day makes
for Herc., you bet!"

"I think we'd better let him take the mast,
And with the anchor cable make a cast."

"He could n't catch the measles with that
blind."

"He's caught a cold already, in his mind."

"No doubt it's lots of sport for manly men
To cast that rope and wind it up again;"
From Atalanta came this parting shot,
Then went below to fix her Psyche knot.

But Hercules cast far upon the tide,
And gently jerked the lure from side to side,
When suddenly a great fish passing by,
Turned in his course and quickly seized
the fly.

Then Hercules, with triumph in his look,
Did yank the rod and set the big brass hook;
This monstrous fish, as long as half the ship,
Then started off as if to make a trip
Around the world in half a dozen days;
But Hercules knew all his water ways,
His scaly tricks, and fishy manners, too;
He knew a fish from gills to tail, all thro'.

He snubbed him short, the great fish leaped
on high,
Fell down again, and made the water fly;

BOOK I.

And back and forth he went, and to and fro,
The heavy rod was bending like a bow;
And up and down he leaped, this way and
that,
Sometimes 't was hard to tell where he was
“at;”

And like a buzz-saw whirled the curious reel;
But Hercules, with sinews strong as steel,
On bended rod did play the fish with skill;
Some bet he would, some bet he would not, kill.

Twice underneath the ship the huge fish
went,
But Hercules, this trick did circumvent,
By passing rod and line around the stern;
Then off upon another tack did turn
This monstrous fish. And now two hours
had passed;
It seemed as though the fight all day would
last;

Till, by a lucky chance came driving by,
Old Neptune, with his sea-horse team so spry.
Astounded was the famous old sea-king,
And stopped to see the outcome of this thing.

He much admired the queer, new-fangled
way,
With rod and reel a monstrous fish to play.
He watched the rushing, leaping, diving fish;
He heard the rattle of the reel, and swish
Of tautened line, that through the water cut;
And saw the angler give the fish the butt.
As underneath his car the fish did plunge,
He, with his trident, gave a sharp, quick
lunge,



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

And gaffed the fish; then held it up aloft;
The heroes cheered, and all their helmets
doffed;
And praised both Hercules and Neptune,
too;—
Who threw the fish on deck, and said:
“Adieu!”



ND now a fair wind springing up, just then,
They hoisted sail; got under way again.
Toward evening, Tiphys,
saw a land he knew—
The Mysian land, well-watered, fertile, too.
They beached the Argo on the sandy shore,
And near the river Cios, with good store
Of fish and game; with pleasant groves of
trees;
A camping spot that could not fail to please.
Around the fire of olive logs that night,
They told of deeds of prowess, sport and fight.
Next morning, Hercules, set out to find
A tree exactly suited to his mind,
From which to make an oar both stout and
long;
An oar expressly made for one so strong.
The others filled afresh the water jars;
Repaired the rigging, too, like good Jack-tars;
And some went fishing, with the usual brag,
Still others went to hunt the lordly stag;
And one and all, each in his chosen way,
Resolved to spend a happy, pleasant day.



BOOK I.

Toward evening, Hylas, squire of Hercules,
Went wandering thro' the grove of oaken trees,
With brazen pitcher, searching for a spring
Of cool, refreshing water; and did sing
With very gladness; and his charming voice
Rang thro' the woods—made even birds
rejoice.
Now Hylas was a handsome youth, whose hair,
In golden ringlets fell about his fair
And girlish face. At last he found the spring,
And on the velvet sward himself did fling,
Beside the cool and deep and limpid stream,
To rest his graceful limbs, and doze and dream.
The summer afternoon went on apace;
The rising moon shone full on Hylas' face;
The night-birds sung, the crickets chirped
with glee;
Still Hylas slept, from thought of danger free.
Then from the deep and silent pool emerged
A lovely water-nymph, and round her surged
The moonlit waves; and from her dripping hair
Fell showers of sparkling water jewels, rare.
She then stepped out upon the sloping bank,
And made her way thro' reeds and rushes dank;
The full moon on her filmy garments beamed,
Thro' which her form like polished ivory
gleamed.



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



HE stood before the sleeping youth, entranced;
The moonbeams thro' his golden ringlets danced.
Upon the mossy bank she then reclined,
And gazing on the sleeping youth, her mind

Was filled with love and admiration true;
A youth so fair and comely, godlike, too,
She ne'er had seen before. She heaved a sigh,
And crooned a soft and tuneful lullaby:

“O come, and be my love beneath the waves,

And dwell with me in mossy, coral caves;
Come, be my love, fair youth, we'll never part;
You'll reign forever in my fond, true heart.”

Then raising Hylas, sleeping, in her arms,
She paused awhile to gaze upon his charms;
Then stole along the reedy, sedgy bank,
And with her burden in the deep pool sank.
Poor Hylas never would be seen again;
He doubtless died with water on the brain.
To be exact, his friend Asclepius,
Would diagnose it hydrocephalus.

Next morn they searched the woods for miles around,
But gentle Hylas never more was found.
Then Hercules, and Polyphemus, too,
O'ercome with grief, resolved to leave the crew,
And stay behind to search both far and near,
To find some trace of Hylas, loved so dear.

BOOK I.

Then with sad hearts the others went
aboard;
To lose three comrades they could ill afford;
But Jason said, and so did all the rest,
Whate'er the fates decreed, that were the best.
A bright effulgent light then shone around,
And from the waves arose a fearful sound;
Then from the sea old Glaucus raised his head,
And to the wondering crew the sea-god said:
 “O, Jason, and ye heroes of his quest,
‘T is true, indeed, that what’s decreed is best;
Grieve not for Hercules, nor Hylas, fair,
Nor Polyphemus; for the gods declare
That Hercules to Argos must return,
His twelve great labors to perform, to earn
A life among the deathless gods, ye see;
And Polyphemus, ‘t is declared that he
Must found a city where you camped last
night,
And everything that’s happened is just right;
For Hylas now’s a very happy spouse,
And with his lovely wife is keeping house;
They keep a famous ocean swell resort,
And Hylas now’s a famed aquatic sport.
So bid farewell to every vain regret;
You’ve got enough to think about, you bet!”



ARGUMENT.

They reach Bithynia. Amycus, king of the Bebryces, having challenged any of them to box with him, is slain by Polydeuces, and in the subsequent fight many of the Bebryces fall. At Salmydessa in Thrace they find blind Phineus, whom the sons of Boreas relieve from the attacks of the Harpies. In return he tells them of their voyage. Hence they come to the Symplegades, and, after escaping through them, are received by Lycus, king of the Mariandyni. Idmon and Tiphys die there. They meet with strange adventures among the Chalybes, Tibareni, and Mossynoeci. Coming to an island infested by "the birds of Ares," they pick up the shipwrecked sons of Chalciope, who henceforth serve them as guides to Colchis.—(*Adapted from the Scholiasts.*)



And Juno rode upon a
cloud on high,
Co watch and guard their
progress from the sky.

BOOK II.



HEY sailed all day with wind
abaft and free;
And all felt grieved to lose
their comrades three.
They sailed all night till dawn,
the wind still fair,

Then when the wind went down, to oars
repair;

And just at sunrise anchored in a bight
Beneath Posideum headland, on the right.
Here Amycus the giant king did dwell,
King of the Bebryces, and known quite well
To be a champion pugilist and tough,
At least he held the belt, and talked enough.
He made a law that none dared disobey:
That every stranger, chance threw in his
way,

Should have a fight with him, a boxing
match;

He always killed his man—he got no scratch.

The ship was gently rocking on her keel;
The Argonauts had had their morning meal,
And on the shore were sitting round the fire,
While Orpheus sang and played his tuneful
lyre.

Then Amycus came stalking down the shore,
And like a surly lion loud did roar:

“What ho! ye thieves, marauders, sailor
men!

You’ve landed here without permission; then
Know ye that I am Amycus, the king,
And in your faces I my challenge fling:
The boldest man must fight me on the spot,

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

This is my law, and see ye fail me not;
Trot out your man; this favor I've allowed,
Or single-handed I'll clean out the crowd."



"IVE us a rest, good king," then
Jason said,
"Or I will be compelled to
punch your head."
"You're talking thro' your
helmet, Amycus;"

Said Pollux, champion boxer, "one of us
Could give you cards and spades, casino, too,
And knock you out; an easy thing to do."

"A bad man from Bebrycia, is this king,"
Said Erginus, "I'll wager anything
That he does all his fighting thro' the press."
"The press of circumstances, I should guess,"
Rejoined Tiphys, "and the proper thing
Would be to grant his pressing suit, this
king."

"All right," said Pollux, "that suits me, you
know,
And at his royal nibs I'll have a go."

And Amycus then smiled with inward joy,
To think how quick he'd pulverize this boy.
Then Jason marked a ring upon the sand;
And at one side the Argonauts did stand,
And at the other side stood Amycus
And all his crowd, quite eager for a muss.
Then Pollux laid aside his robe and cloak,
And to his brother, Castor, then he spoke:

"You'll be my second, Castor, in this
fight;

BOOK II.

Ampulla-holder, Idas; that's all right;
And Jason will be umpire, all agree;
And Amycus may choose the referee."

Then Amycus he chose Lycoreus;
His seconds, Aretus and Oryntus.

And now the seconds bound the thongs
of hide

About their hands—stood ready by their
side.

Then Pollux spoke and said: "Since you
are king,
I'll give you choice of sides in this round
ring."

But Amycus, impatient, tossed his head,
And scorned the generous offer, as he said:
"Oh, talk is cheap; I've had enough of that;
I'm ready now to fight at drop of hat."
"All right," said Pollux, "I will do that
thing,"

And shied his brother Castor in the ring;
Because that was the proper thing to do;
All first-class mills start up that way; 'tis
true.

The combatants were ready in the ring,
And Pollux smiled; not so the surly king;
A thunder cloud sat on his regal brow,
His big and burly form erect; and now
His ponderous fists he put before his face—
He stood, a giant bruiser, in his place.
And Pollux, tall and graceful, full of zeal;
His form well-knit and muscles hard as steel;
The hero of a hundred fights was he,
The champion of the cæstus, all agree.



HEN Jason gave the word, the burly king Rushed like a goaded bull around the ring, His long arms striking out on every side, To force the fighting now he vainly tried;

But Pollux, wary, warded every blow; He wished to learn the method of his foe. The first round done, and not a blow was struck;

The king disgusted with his sorry luck, And great beads dripping from his face, he cried:

"Is this a fight or foot-race; who'll decide?"
"I guess it is," said Pollux, laughing hard,
"It seems you're good at neither, old blow-hard."

Then Jason gave the word again and smiled;

He said: "O, king, be gentle with the child." Then Pollux quickly with his left let fly, And landed squarely on the king's right eye.
"First blow for Pollux!" said the umpire; then

The seconds rubbed, and then, refreshed the men.

Then, at the word, both came up to the scratch;

It now looked like a genuine slugging match, As blow for blow resounded thro' the air;
"The king is groggy!" Jason did declare.

BOOK II.

The king then launched a fearful right hand blow

That would have felled an ox—it was no go,
For Pollux ducked his head, it grazed his ear,
And swinging round his left he put it clear
Upon the kingly nose; the claret flew;
“First blood for Pollux!” shouted all the crew.

Another round; the king was rather slow;
One eye was closed, and still the blood did flow;
His beard was soaked with bloody froth and foam,
‘Twere best for him if he had stayed at home;
But mad with pain and rage he fumed and roared,
Like some great beast by spear of hunter gored.
On Pollux now he rushed with desperate strength;
The blows fell thick and fast, until at length
Brave Pollux dealt a solar plexus blow
Full on his chest, and down the king did go.
“First knock-down blow for Pollux!” all did cry;
And cheers and shouts for Pollux rent the sky.

The men were groomed and rested once again,
Though Pollux seemed quite fresh and strong;
and then,
He had not lost his temper, which is bad,



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

For whom the gods destroy they first make mad.

He took a pull at the ampulla, and,
Of course, he came up smiling to his stand.
Poor Amycus was in a dreadful plight,
Tho' still expecting he would win the fight;
He never had been vanquished, heretofore;
But then he'd never met his match before.

HE staggered to the center of the ring,
His hide-bound fists before his face did bring,
And worked them back and forth in bruiser style,
And roared and cursed and fretted all the while.

He had a poultice on his battered eye,
Yet loud and boastful was his proud defy;
A compress on his broken, bloody nose,
Yet every inch a king, and bold his pose.

He rushed at Pollux, striking fast and hard;
But Pollux, ever watchful, kept his guard;
Stood fast and firm—he knew his tactics now—

A fair exchange of blows he did allow;
Such fearful blows, as they each other knock,
It made them quake from head to heels—the shock.

And Amycus gave Pollux many thwacks,
And Pollux gave the king as many whacks.

BOOK II.

Then Amycus, encouraged, sparred for breath,
Then made a rush for victory or death.
And Pollux now determined that the fight
Should end this round—in that he was quite right.

He now advanced upon his kingly foe,
In scientific manner dealt a blow
That staggered Amycus, and broke his jaw;
Then mauled with right and left his features raw;

Knocked out his teeth, and battered sore his head,

Knocked off one ear, and hanging by a thread
The other one; and then the scalp, with gore,
From forehead to the royal crown he tore;
And then with all his force he gave a blow
That broke his neck, and down the king did go,

A shapeless mass of common human clay.
The king was dead, and Pollux won the day!

The Bebryces, aghast, were stricken dumb,
To see their king, invincible, succumb;
They seized their clubs with murderous intent,



ND madly rushed at Pollux;
then gave vent
To howls of rage and hate—
for vengeance cried;
But Jason and the rest flew
to his side;
With sword and spear they
soon drove back the horde,

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

And cut and slashed, and thrust and pierced,
and bored;
Ancæus with his battle-axe did chop,
And cut and carve, and from their bodies lop
Their heads and limbs; he killed, I think, a
score;
The rest, they killed as many, maybe more,
And would have killed them all, perhaps, if they
Had not concluded then to run away.



THE Argonauts did celebrate
that night,
The happy ending of this
unsought fight;
And to Apollo offered sac-
rifice;

There all the honor and the glory lies.
And Orpheus extemporized and sung
An ode to Pollux, and his praises rung;
And with an olive wreath the hero crowned;
Then all with wine and song the troubles
drowned.

Next morn the quiet day broke bright and
fair;
The swallows circled high up in the air;
The sea-gulls in their swift erratic flight,
Skimmed o'er the water blue, on pinions
white;
The shore-birds piped and twittered on the
sand;
And peace and quiet reigned o'er sea and land.
The dead men lying on the blood-stained
shore,

BOOK II.

Had peace and quiet found for evermore.
The smoke from altar fires still smouldering,
rose

Like holy incense, for the calm repose
Of those unhappy souls, that passed away
From out those ruined tenements of clay.

The Argo now was under way again,
And rowing slowly were the tired men,
When just in time a breeze, both fresh and
fair,

Was sent by Neptune, for they were his
care;

And soon into the Bosphorus they sailed,
Whose swirling tide the Argo stemmed, and
quailed

Before a mighty wave, that mountain high,
Came rushing down between the sea and
sky,

And threatened to engulf and overwhelm
The gallant ship; but Tiphys turned the
helm

And climbed and mounted o'er the mighty
wave,

And by his skill the ship and crew did save.
This danger passed, they sailed all day and
night,

Till the Bithynian land was reached all right.

They anchored in the haven of the town
Called Salmydessa, and of some renown;
For here dwelt Phineus, the prophet-king,
So wise, in fact, that he knew every thing;
The past and present, and the future, too,
He knew just like a book, and read it through.

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



LITTLE learning is a dangerous thing,
But too much knowledge ruined this Thracian king ;
He grew so wise he thought to rival Jove,
Who struck him blind ; and Harpies with him strove

At every meal, and snatched his food away ;
No morsel did they suffer any day
To pass his lips, until the food they'd spoiled
With putrid, reeking odors ; thus they foiled
The poor blind king, who gladly would have died ;

But he was doomed to live, all joy denied.

Now Zetes and Calais of the crew,
And sons of Boreas, the north wind, too,
Were blood relations of this prophet king,
And they, it was decreed, should succor bring
To this poor, feeble, persecuted man,
Who long had suffered sore from Jove's dread ban.

Now Phineus a banquet did prepare,
A costly, sumptuous, recherche affair,
To honor Jason and the heroes all,
And bade them welcome to the royal hall ;
For though a poor, afflicted monarch, he
Was rich in worldly goods, as misery.

And seated round the festive board, that night,
He called each hero by his name, aright ;
For, by his divination, well he knew
The object of the Argo, and her crew.

BOOK II.

He gave them much advice as to their course,
Forewarned them of the dangers, and their
source;

And told them of the awful floating rocks,
The Symplegades, and their clashing shocks,
That ground to pieces everything that tried
To force a passage to the other side.

But, for a guide, he gave to them a dove,
A harbinger of peace, good will and love;
For well he knew that Jason and the rest
Would soon deliver him from his great pest,
The Harpies; and quite happy did he feel,
That he would soon enjoy a good square
meal.



OW, when the Argonauts
were satisfied

With viands choice, and all
their wants supplied,
The king then from his
royal chair of state,

Did take a roasted quail upon his plate.
He dared not eat till all the rest were through,
In deff'rence to their appetites; he knew
The Harpies would swoop down, and then
pollute,

All food that he dared touch—flesh, bread or
fruit,

And give to it so foul a smell and taste,
That all would leave the banquet hall in
haste.



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES



O when the king the quail put on his plate,
The Harpies came, afraid they'd be too late;
They came with shrieks, flew thro' the open door,
And snatched his food away, and hovered o'er

On long black wings, with women's faces fair,
While from their necks streamed manes of long black hair;
Instead of fingers, long black talons grew,
And o'er the king these grawsome creatures flew;
And such a putrid stench filled all the air,
'Twas more than human flesh and blood could bear.

The brothers, Zetes and Calais, drew
Their swords, and on their wing'd heels swiftly flew,
And chased the Harpies, shrieking, from the hall;
They ne'er appeared again; but that's not all;
The food was then examined, then found out—
'Twas all Limburger cheese and sauerkraut.
And now, next morn, good Phineus, the king,
Gave presents to the crew of everything
To help them on their way, and please the eye;

BOOK II.

Corn, wine and oil, and cloth of deepest dye,
And well-wrought arms, and gems and jewels
rare;

And gave them sage advice for every care;
His troubles with the Harpies being o'er.

They loosed the double cables from the
shore;
The heroes with stout arms the long oars
plied,

The Argo left the harbor on the tide;
And Juno rode upon a cloud on high,
To watch, and guard their progress, from the
sky.

Much need of help the heroes soon would
feel,

Though now they swiftly sailed on even keel.
Far off they saw the narrow, rocky strait,
The tow'ring, beetling cliffs that formed the
gate,

Thro' which they soon would be compelled
to pass,

Along the winding passage; and, alas!
Right in this narrow strait, between two seas,
The rocks Cyanean—Symplegades—
The dreaded Clashers, back and forth did
roll;

No living thing had ever passed them, whole.
And soon they met the rushing, swirling
tide,

And furious eddies whirled on every side;
High rocky walls rose straightway from the
shores;

With scarcely room to ply their labored oars.



YE GODS & LITTLE FISHES

And through this dark and dreadful rocky gorge
The gallant Argo straight ahead did forge;
O'er whirlpools black, and hissing currents through,
She forged ahead, urged by her willing crew.



HEY heard the clash, and felt
the fearful shocks,
That came resounding from
the floating rocks.
Then soon they saw those
dreadful shapes arise

From out the sea, and tower toward the skies;
They floated back against the cliffs, and then
Rushed toward the center, where they met
again.

(A double-acting trap it was, in fine,
And bound to work, a-comin' or a-gwine.)

The heroes were appalled, dismayed; the
sight

Struck terror to their hearts, and well it might.
It seemed a hopeless task to persevere,
They never could go through; that was most
clear.

Then Jason's voice was heard above the din:
"My heroes brave, this game we're bound
to win!"

The dove that Phineus, the king, gave me,
Will surely guide us to the Euxine Sea;
If she in safety past the rocks doth fly,
Then we may safely pass the Clashers by;
Now Lynceus, who has such famous sight,

BOOK II.

Will stand upon the prow and mark her flight!"

Then Lynceus, the gray dove in his hand,
Upon the vessel's prow did firmly stand;
And when the rocks were opening, let her go;
She darted like an arrow from a bow,
And through the narrow chasm winged her flight—

The Clashers came together in their might;
The dove had safely passed, except the tip
Of one tail feather, that the rocks did clip.

This, Lynceus, with his keen eye did spy,
And saw her safely mounting toward the sky;

And loudly did he shout to warn the crew,
When at the last she safely fluttered thro'.

Then Tiphys gave the word to row with speed,

And bravely then the heroes rowed, indeed;
And Jason urged them onward; still they toiled;

The waves dashed o'er the deck, the water boiled;

And now the rocks were parting at their prow,

And to their oars with double strength they bow.

The howling, whistling blast, blew hoarse and strong,

Yet stronger still the Argo moved along;
The rushing, foam-capped torrent, swiftly passed,

Yet swifter still the Argo moved at last;

YE GODS &
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'Mid dashing and the splashing of the waves,
The roaring and the booming of the caves,
'Mid crashing and the clashing of the rocks,
The buffettings and blows and heavy shocks—
Still faster sped the Argo, like a flash—
The Clashers now were closing with a crash.



MIGHTY, arching wave,
the Argo tossed,
And checked her speed; then
all, indeed, seemed lost!
But Juno, ever faithful, with
one hand

Held back the rock; and Jason gave command
To row for life, and all they held most dear!
Then Juno with her right hand pushed her
clear!

The rocks then closed behind the gallant ship,
And from her high-peaked stern a piece did clip.

Behind them closed the rocks for evermore,
For so it was decreed long time before,
That should a ship and crew pass safely
through,

One rock they should become, instead of two;
And firmly bound and rooted to the shore,
And leave an open passage evermore.

The tired crew with willing hands then
spread

The lofty sail; the Argo rushed ahead
Before a timely breeze both fresh and free,
Along the border of the Euxine Sea.
The river Rhebas, rock Colone, and
The river Phyllis, with its bar of sand,

BOOK II.

Were swiftly passed; the wind still fresh and fair,
And day and night they sailed, nor thought of care;
'Till just at twilight on the third day out,
The helmsman Tiphys put the ship about,
And anchored in the lee of Thynian isle;
Right glad the crew to go ashore, awhile.

While seated round the camp-fire, burning bright,
There came a sudden flash and greater light;
The god Apollo quickly passed them by,
As fast he sped between the earth and sky.
The Argonauts were terror-stricken, quite,
And bowed their heads till he was out of sight;
And then a sacrifice they did prepare,
And hymns to Phoebus rose upon the air;
And Orpheus performed a song and dance,
In honor of the lucky circumstance.

With weather fair, and favoring gales next day,
Again they started on their watery way;
And soon they passed the stream Sangarius,
The Lycus, and the lake Anthemous;
And all that night the wind blew half a gale;
They still pursued their way with shortened sail;
And in the morning anchored just behind
The Acherusian headland, and did find
A harbor safe and pleasant, in the lee
Of this bold headland of the Euxine Sea.



ND here the Mariandyni did dwell,
And good and wise king Lycus ruled them well;
And he a welcome warm to Jason gave,
And all the Argonauts, the heroes brave,
Who fought and whipt the cruel Bebryces,
Who long had been his dreaded enemies.

And Lycus gave to Pollux presents rare,
A golden badge and champion belt to wear,
For knocking out and killing Amucus,
The double-fisted bruiser—hateful cuss!
And Pollux said to Jason: "Don't you see?
King Lycus seems to like us—you and me."
But, Lycus gave to each and every one,
Some token for the battle they had won;
And Atalanta, fair, was not ignored,
She got a jeweled cup, also a sword;
Her heart was full, so full she could not speak,
So Atalanta kissed his royal cheek.

For many days the heroes lingered here,
The guests of Lycus, and his princely cheer.
The nobles of the court, a noble clan,
The Mariandyni, and Mary Ann—
Or some such name—King Lycus' noble spouse,
Did entertain and keep an open house,
And strive to please; in fact they did their best,
In honor of the heroes and their quest.

BOOK II.

The Argonauts and Mariandyni
In all athletic games and sports did vie;
In games on land, aquatic sports as well,
In all of these the heroes did excel.

The tournament for shooting with the bow
Was won by Atalanta, for although
Brave Meleager tied her in the bout,
She beat her beau ideal, miss and out;
Although a miss, she never scored a miss—
(It seems to me there's something queer in
this)—

If women ever voted in that day,
No doubt she voted as she shot, alway.

And Castor, Oileus and Idas,
Took all the prizes in the throwing class
With spear and javelin—it went their way;
For they were men of mark; good marks-
men they.

And Jason with the discus, or the quoit,
Of all the others proved the most adroit;
Defeated Peleus, with a wondrous score,
The champion of the discus, heretofore.
He held the record at the Pythian meet,
And until now had never met defeat.

And Telamon, in wrestling, took first
prize;
He always threw his man, whate'er his size,
But never threw the game, as men now do—
The hippodrome's a modern thing, and new.
In olden time they wrestled for the crown
Of laurel leaves, and threw each other down;
The stadium was crowded—it was free;
The best man always won, as it should be;



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

But now-a-days the thing's all cut and dried,
The principals the principal divide;
They squirm and double, fall by turns, and
so—

The people pay to see the sorry show.

 ANCÆUS won at boxing—
Pollux barred,
For when the least excited he
hit hard—
Ancæus won the prize, for he
was best,
He fought with fists, and gave his mouth a
rest.

In all the chariot races Castor won;
When he was through, some scarcely had
begun.

He held the record on the stadic course,
Knew all about a chariot and a horse;
'Twas not much use for any to compete—
When Castor held the reins, he won the heat;
On chariot wheels he run so well, they say,
Our little wheels are casters still, to-day.

Foot races then were much enjoyed by all;
And many were the sprinters, short and tall.
Calais held the Pythian record; true,
Some said he used his wings—both run and
flew;

But wings on this occasion were ruled out,
King Lycus made the rules and terms, no
doubt;

'Twas his opinion, pinions should be barred,
And legs alone should get an entry card.

BOOK II.

Calais, notwithstanding, won the first,
The stadion, and like a meteor burst
Around the course, and run with legs and
feet,

But really seemed to fly, he was so fleet.

By Euphemus the next foot race was won,
Though closely pressed by Erginus, who run
So fast and well, that cheers and shouts arose
To cheer him on; but just before the close
He tripped and fell—the golden cup was lost;
This slip, betwixt the cup and lip, the cost.

Then Atalanta won the free for all,
As graceful as a deer, so lithe and tall;
A spinster sprinter who outstripped the rest—
I mean outran, I think that sounds the best—
Her little feet seemed scarce to touch the
ground,

As twice the stadium she ran around,
And all the others, left she, far behind;
The queen, herself, the laurel wreath en-
twined

About her shapely head, and kissed her brow;
Such grace and speed she'd never seen till
now.

"You must be very tired, dear," she said,
"You breathe in such short pants; you're
nearly dead."

"Oh, never mind," said Atalanta, fair,
"When married, longer breeches I will wear."

In leaping, Zetes won the olive crown;
He jumped so high it seemed he'd ne'er come
down;

Fair leaping, too, it was; his purple wings

YE GODS &
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Were folded close, and tied with leathern
strings.



THE great event of that eventful
day,
Was racing on the water of
the bay;
But only two in this race could
compete—

Euphemus and At'lanta; who so fleet,
That they could run dry shod upon the sea,
And run they did that day, as all agree.
They started from the ship and ran ashore,
About two hundred yards, or little more;
Euphemus won the race, was first to land;
The boy more buoyant was, you understand;
At'lanta would have won in ten yards more,
She touched his shoulder as he touched the
shore.

Now this account some may think over-
drawn,

To run on water as upon a lawn;
I'll make it plain and feasible, I hope:
For sandals they had cakes of ivory soap,
Which could not sink; and these their bodies
bore—

So with the soap they washed themselves
ashore.

The heralds then announced that on next
day

The Argo and her crew would sail away;
That on the following morn there would take
place

A novel and peculiar chariot race;

BOOK II.

A chariot race, they said, without a horse,
One never seen before on any course;
Not at the game Olympian, nor at
The Pythian or Nemean; and that
The sons of Boreas would run the race,
Both Zetes and Calais strive for place.

Now Zetes, with some rods of brass, and
reeds,
And chariot wheels, made two velocipedes,
With pedals on the front wheel, handle bar,
And saddles made of shields; they were by far,
The most astounding chariots ever seen—
Bicycles we would call them now, I ween.
Thus, Zetes was the father of the bike;
His progeny to-day are not much like
Their rude progenitors; but as to speed—
Well, that's another story, as you'll read.
At all events, the bikes were stout and
strong,
And on their broad wheels smoothly rolled
along.
The hubs and spokes and felloes made of
wood;
With thick broad tires of brass, and welded
good;
But no pneumatic tubes, so much admired—
'T is punctured tires that make the fellows
tired.

Now Zetes and Calais both had wings,
On heels, like Mercury; and with these things
They chased the Harpies, screaming, through
the air,
From the Bithynian land to Crete—their lair.



EXT morning Lycus and the queen and court Assembled early, eager for the sport; The stadium was crowded; all were there; The Argonauts the guests of ladies, fair;

And Atalanta at the king's right hand, The place of honor held in the grand stand; And Jason sat beside the lovely queen; Such grace and beauty ne'er before was seen.

And now when everything was all prepared, The heralds blew their trumpets, and declared:

The sons of Boreas would now compete, And race in horseless chariots; a feat, The heralds added, heretofore unknown, And one unique, as every one would own.

Then Zetes and Calais on their wheels, Propelled by pedals, now appeared; and peals Of loud applause, and trumpets blare did greet The brothers, as they drove their wheels so fleet.

The ladies, wreaths and garlands rare, did fling,

As they rode up abreast before the king, Who gave the word and dropped the flag, and then—

Away they sped around the course, and when The wings upon their heels were brought in play,

BOOK II.

As swift as hawks they speeded on their way;
The heavy wheels seemed scarce to touch the ground,

As o'er the course the brothers flew around.

Such lightning speed was never seen before;
Old Boreas, himself, could do no more,
As scorching swiftly round the course they race,

The axles fairly smoking with the pace.

Calais was ahead, till at the turn,
His hubs began to blaze and fiercely burn;
Then Zetes forged ahead and kept the lead,
Calais followed closely, and, indeed,
He lapped the hind wheel of his brother's bike,
As underneath the score they passed, much like

Two fiery meteors with smoking trail.
And such a splendid record could not fail
To cause the wild excitement that arose;
The loud huzzas and cheers that at the close
Did greet the brothers both; and each was crowned

With laurel wreaths—tumultuous then the sound.

The king gave Zetes, then, a cup and ring;
A richly broidered scarf the queen did fling
About the neck of Calais—and so,
The novel race was ended, and the show.

The king had planned a royal hunt that day

To please his guests, if they could only stay;
And Jason was persuaded to forego
His sailing, for another day or so;

YE GODS &
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He would have sailed that very day, alas !
Could he have known the thing that came to
pass.

THE hunt had proved a great success for all,
And many were the trophies, great and small.
Returning toward the town in joyous mood,
A fierce and wounded boar rushed from a wood,
And with his cruel tusks he ripped and tore
The seer Idmon, who was wounded sore ;
Then Peleus ran up and with his spear
He pierced the boar ; and Idas being near,
With his great battle axe he cleft its head ;
This done, they found their comrade Idmon, dead !
Poor Idmon, who his own death had foretold,
In this great quest to seize the Fleece of Gold.
They bore the lifeless hero to the town,
And manly tears they shed, their grief to drown.
And then upon the heels of this great woe
There came a greater one, could that be so ;
The helmsman Tiphys, bitten by a snake,
Was also dead—enough their hearts to break.
They buried their loved comrades by the sea,
And mourned for days with heartfelt agony.
They sailed away at last, with many fears,
And Lycus sped his parting guests with tears ;

BOOK II.

And Dascylus, his son and heir, he sent—
As some small recompense, was his intent—
To join and aid the heroes in their quest;
To make amends he did his very best.

Ançæus, now the helmsman, steered the ship;
A beam wind blowing, caused the sail to dip,
As fast upon her way the Argo sped,
The river Callichorus just ahead.
And soon the tomb of Sthenelus, the brave,
Upon the beach, washed by the salt sea wave,
Was seen upon the starboard bow, a-lee—
A surfeit of the surf, indeed, had he.
(This warrior bold by woman's hand was slain;
An arrow wound—but deep enough, 'tis plain—
Inflicted by an Amazonian maid;
And Hercules, his friend, the last rites paid.)
And now the heroes saw a fearful sight—
The ghost of Sthenelus, in armor bright—
His helmet with four plumes and blood-red crest;
Upon his tomb he stood, and looked his best;
He gazed and smiled at Jason and his crew,
Then waved his hand and quickly passed from view.
Then sailing on and on with favoring breeze,
They saw ere long beneath the willow trees,
The stream Parthenius, so fair and bright;
The city Sesamus was passed at night;



YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

The Erythinian hills, Crobialis,
And Cromne, and the wooded Cytorus
Were passed; Carambis then was left astern;
They sailed again all day and night, in turn.



NON they reached the river
Halys, where
They anchored for a day or
two, and there
They filled their jars with water,
fresh and sweet;
The sons of Deimachus here
they meet—

Deileon and Phlogius, also
Brave Autolycus, all of whom we know
Had fought, with Hercules, the Amazons;
And all were eager, these three noble sons,
To join the quest, with Jason, for the Fleece,
All for the glory and renown of Greece;
They signed the roll, and then embarked that
day,

And with the heroes gladly sailed away.

While sailing on, there rose a heavy gale;
They laid the Argo to, and furled the sail;
Then manned the oars and labored with the
sea,

Made for the land, a harbor and a lee.
The headland of the Amazons in sight,
They doubled to their oars and rowed with
might;
The headland then they weathered, and at
last
They safely in the sheltered harbor passed.

BOOK II.

And here they found good fishing, for it seems
The Thermodon is formed of many streams;
About a hundred branches, large and small,
And many kinds of fishes in them all.
With slender reeds for rods, and silken lines,
The heroes found good sport beneath the pines,
And oaks, and olive trees, that fringed the shore
Of each bright stream; a stream for each, and more.

They fished with bait and artificial fly;
To catch the biggest fish they all did try.
The small ones they threw back again, to grow;
They did not fish for count, but size, you know.

This goes to show that in the olden time,
To fish for count was thought to be a crime;
It seems quite clear the fish-hog was unknown,
For he belongs to modern days, we'll own—
A fishing dude, who catches great and small,
But mostly fingerlings, and counts them all.

Now, Atalanta had the nicest rig,
And all the fish she killed were game and big;

Her rod, a straight and slender, supple reed;
Her flies, tied by herself, were rare, indeed;
Her cast, composed of three artistic flies,
To all the heroes was a great surprise.



UCH hooks I've never seen," said Telamon,
"They're very small, but very good, I'll own."
"My fishing hooks," she said,
"are sharp and fine,
I had them made from pattern wholly mine;

The shape is something new, you may depend,
And I have named the hook the 'Grecian Bend.'"

"Now, tell me, Atalanta," Jason said,
"What have you named this fly, with wings so red?"

"That fly," said Atalanta, with much pride,
"Is 'Maid of Athens.'" Then the others cried:

"It's made of feathers!"—"Yes, and hand-made, too."

"If 'Maid of Athens,' it should then be blue."

"You're right," said she, "it's hand-fly in the cast,

Byronically speaking, and the last.
The middle one, the bob-fly, funny thing!
Is made of covert feathers from the wing
Of Pegasus, and 'Peggy' is its name;
Its flight is quite poetic; all the same
A right good fly; its wings are also red;
For when Perseus lopped Medusa's head,
And Pegasus sprang from her blood, of course,

BOOK II.

We know he was a blooded, bright bay
horse."

"Why don't you name it 'horse-fly'?"
Castor said;

But Atalanta only shook her head.

"The end, or tail-fly, leader, if you choose,
Is best of all; a very clever ruse;
'Quicksilver Doctor,' I have named this fly,
So nimble, quick and lively, smart and
spry;

For Mercury I've named it, pretty thing;
It's made of feathers from his right heel
wing."

"If that's the case," said Meleager, then,
"Why should n't 'heeler' be its cognomen?
Or 'salivator,' I should call it sure."—
"I think you'd better take the Keely Cure,"
Said Atalanta, getting somewhat tired.
But all the same, her flies were much ad-
mired.

And fish rose freely to the clever lures—
The deed, and not the name,
success assures.

Next day the Argo getting
under way,
The Amazons came trooping
toward the bay,
Their fighting harness on;
and at their head
Marched queen Hippolyte with
martial tread

But Jason and his crew were all aboard,
And safe from Amazonian spear or sword.





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HEN queen Hippolyte approached the shore;
With angry voice proclaimed she was for war
With all marauding ships and roving men;
“Be off!” she cried, “and do not come again;

Hereafter, fishing rights will be reserved,
And game and fish, by law, will be preserved;

The bank of every stream will bear the sign:
‘No Fishing Here,’ and death will be the fine.”

“Good queen,” quoth Jason, “that is hardly so,
For we found fishing very good, you know;
A sign so false would never, never do;
As you are good and beautiful, be true.
We came to fish, and do not care to fight;
We only took the large ones, which is right;
The small ones we threw back again to grow.”

“If that’s the case,” replied the queen, “then know
That you are welcome any time to fish
In all my streams, and come whene’er you wish.”

The heroes thanked the queen, with one accord—

Thus angling virtue finds its own reward.
And now the Argo left the land-locked bay;

With sail unfurled, proceeded on her way.

BOOK II.

Next day, toward night, the smoke borne on
the breeze,
Proclaimed the land where dwelt the Chalybes;
The mining folk who delved the iron ore,
And worked amid the furnace smoke and
roar.

Then next they passed the headland bold
and sheer,
And named for mighty Zeus, whom all fear.
And then they coasted by the rocky shore
Where dwelt the Tibareni, men who bore
Vicarious troubles—so it is averred—
Which you may read in scholia, word for
word.

And then the Holy mountain rose in view,
And hills where dwelt the Mossynœci, too;
These moss-backs, in their houses built of
wood,

Had customs very strange, I've understood;
What others in their houses always do,
They always did outside, in public view.
No room for scandal, then, it would appear,
Among the Mossynœci, that's most clear;
They saw themselves as others saw them,
too,

In Nature's mirror held to public view.

All these they passed; and rowing swiftly,
now,
The isle of Ares on their starboard bow
Loomed up. A huge bird then came swoop-
ing by,
And from his pinion broad and swift let fly
A feather, long and sharp, which quickly sped,

YE GODS &
LITTLE FISHES

And pierced the shoulder, barely missed the head,
Of brave Oileus, who dropped his oar;
Eribotes plucked out the shaft, all gore;
Then with his baldric bound the bleeding wound.
The curious feathered shaft was passed around,
And viewed with wonder by the Argo's crew.



JUST then another bird appeared and flew
Above the mast, and shot a feathered dart,
Which hissing thro' the air caused all to start,
Save Clytius, who with his well-strung bow,
And on the wing, soon laid the huge bird low.
Then rose Amphidamas, and from his place,
Declared the way, this danger new, to face:
"The isle of Ares, I have heard," he said,
"Is guarded well by these huge birds, so dread.
When Hercules with arrows could not drive
The birds Stymphalid, then did he contrive
Another plan, which drove the birds away;
And this the plan we must adopt to-day.
"That plan is now to raise a mighty din,
By clashing sword and buckler; this will win.
When Hercules his brazen armor shook
With dreadful din, the frightened birds forsook

BOOK II.

The mere Stymphalid, filled with wild alarms;
We'll find mere noise annoys them more than
arms."

The heroes then their armor did put on;
Their brazen helmets also did they don.
One-half the crew then roofed the vessel in
With shields and bucklers; then they made a
din

By clashing shield and buckler, sword and
spear,

The others rowed the ship with lessened fear,
Protected by the metal roof o'erhead;
And swiftly toward the shore the Argo sped.

The birds affrighted, from the island rose,
And flew in terror from their noisy foes;
They wildly shot their feathers all away,
And dropped upon the sea in dire dismay;
Their motive power and weapons thus they
lost,

And at the mercy of the waves were tossed.
Thus, some highflyers at the present day,
Their substance and their power throw away.

Arriving at the isle, the heroes found
Four shipwrecked sailors, weak and nearly
drowned;

The sons of Phrixus, bound from Colchis land
For Orchomenus, by the king's command.
For king Æetes, being warned, 't is said,
Of danger from his household, felt a dread
Of these, his daughter Chalciope's sons,
And so the king this threatened danger shuns,
By sending them to sea, and in a boat
Unsafe and old, not fit to sail or float.



ND as foretold by Phineus, these
four
Agreed to go with Jason; what
is more:
Agreed to guide the ship to *Æa*,
where,
The king *Æetes* reigned; whose
constant care

Was well to guard and keep the Golden Fleece,
Stripped from the ram that bore from shores
of Greece

Their father Phrixus to the Colchian land—
The Fleece that Jason now would soon de-
mand.

This Golden Fleece, the brothers did declare,
Was guarded night and day with jealous care;
A sleepless dragon watched beneath the tree
Whereon it hung, a glorious sight to see;
Within the grove of Mars, a sacred thing,
The greatest treasure of the wicked king.

Next morn a gentle wind blew fresh and
free,

They left the isle of Ares on the lee;
And sailing on without mishap, all day,
At night they passed the isle of Philyra.

Philyra in the olden time did dwell
About this isle, and Saturn knew it well;
This water nymph, Philyra, was the *mere*,
Or mother, of the Centaur Chiron, fair.

The Argo, favored by the welcome breeze,
Sailed on and on, and passed the Macrones.
The coast of Becheiri then was passed;
The lawless Sapeira left at last;

BOOK II.

Anon they heard heart-rending cries and shrieks,
And saw an eagle soaring o'er the peaks,
Where to a rock, bound fast with chains of brass,
And afterward the Byzeræ were left
Astern, as onward thro' the waters cleft
The good ship Argo, till arose in view
The cliffs of the Caucasian mountains, blue.
Prometheus was doomed the days to pass;
And on his liver, fed this dreadful bird;
And his, the fearful cries, the heroes heard.

That night they reached their journey's end, at last,
And furled the sail, unstepped the well-tried mast;
And rowing slowly 'gainst the ebbing tide,
They left the city Æa on one side,
Till near the field of Ares, sacred grove,
They anchored in a shady, sheltered cove.
Then from a golden chalice, Jason poured
Libations sweet; the crew with one accord
Gave thanks to all their guardian gods that
they
Had reached their journey's end, and blessed
the day.



•END OF• BOOK II.



ARGUMENT.

Hera and Athena persuade Aphrodite to send Eros to Medea. Meantime Jason comes to Æetes, king of Colchis, and begs the Fleece; but the king was exceeding wroth, and set him great labors to perform, namely, to yoke two fire-breathing bulls, and sow the dragon's teeth upon Ares' acre, and then to slay the earth-born giants who should rise o'er the lea.

But Medea is in love with Jason, and gives him drugs to tame those bulls, telling him how to accomplish all. Wherefore Jason finished the appointed task, to the grief and wonder of Æetes.—(*Adapted from the Scholiasts.*)

*"Then, what's the matter
with brave Jason now?"*



**"OH HE'S
ALL RIGHT!"...**

BOOK III.



Now Jason held a council with his crew;
They pondered well the thing they came to do;
How best the Golden Fleece they might obtain,

And take it back to Iolchos again.
The mighty king they held in wholesome dread,

The son of Helios, the sun, 'twas said;
No king in all the world so great as he,
The proud Æetes, lord of land and sea.

The heroes then resolved to speak him fair,
With friendly words; with precious gifts and rare,
With all the arts of soft diplomacy,
To soothe and flatter this great king, that he
Might haply bid them take the Golden Fleece
From Colchis to the sunny shores of Greece.
But if fair means, their end to gain, should fail,
Then strategy or force must e'en prevail.
No terrors now, nor dangers, could subdue
The ardor and the purpose of the crew.

B

UT Juno, faithful guardian,
knew indeed,
The quest without her aid
would ne'er succeed;
So with Minerva she to
Venus sped,

And to the matchless queen of love she said :
“ My dearest Venus, we your help desire ;
The quest of Jason is the question dire ;
Without your aid, we fear he is undone ;
Request we, therefore, that you send your
son,

Fair Cupid, with his arrows and his bow,
To Colchis land ; in haste, too, must he go.
The king, Æetes, hath a daughter fair,
A comely maid, with wondrous golden hair,
Well skilled in sorc'ry, also, is this maid,
Which she must use in noble Jason's aid.
Now this our plan, Minerva's plan, and
mine ;

Inspire Medea's soul with love divine ;
Bid Cupid wound her with his sharpest
dart,

And plant a love for Jason in her heart.”

“ Most gracious goddess,” Venus then
replied,
“ Your slightest wish shall be my law ;
beside,
To help brave Jason in his noble quest,
Is, I consider, quite a priv'lege blest.
Cupid is shooting craps with Ganymede ;

LITTLE FISHES

I'll send him off, at once, with greatest speed.

You may be sure that he will do his part,
And hit the bull's-eye of Medea's heart."

The river fog hung low the following day,

When Jason started for the town *Æa*.
And with him went the sons of Phrixus,
who,
Were saved from shipwreck by the val'rous crew.

Envolved by the fog that Juno sent,
And safe from prying eyes, their way they went

Across the plain; then through the city gate;
At last within the palace court they wait.

Then Juno caused the cloud of mist to rise,
And wondrous things disclosed to Jason's eyes.

Around the court were marble columns tall,

And brazen arms and armor graced the wall;

And fountains spouting water, milk and wine

And rare perfumes; while tree and plant and vine

Bore luscious fruits, and flowers of gorgeous dyes;

It seemed a glorious, earthly paradise.

About the palace, then, the news soon
spread,
That Phrixus' sons, who, given up for dead,
Had safe returned; the servants wept for joy;
While Chalciope cried: "My boy! my
boy!"
Embraced each son in turn, and welcome
gave
To Jason, who had saved them from the
grave.



EDEA, fairest maid in all
the land,
A sorc'ress, with the fates
at her command,
A priestess of the goddess
Hecate,

No one so loved, nor yet so feared, as she.
Yet modestly she stood aloof and gazed
At Jason's noble, princely mien; amazed
At such a paragon of form and face,
More like a god, than of the human race.

Then last of all came Æetes, the king,
Who inward cursed the news that all did
bring,

That Phrixus' sons had all returned alive;
Some other murd'rous plan he must contrive.
For Helios, his father, long ago,
Had warned him 'gainst a wily, dang'rous
foe

Within his household, one of his own blood,

LITTLE FISHES

Whose secret plotting boded him no good.
His son Absyrtus, and his daughters two,
He knew were ever faithful, loyal, true.
Upon his grandsons, then, suspicion fell;
If rid of them, he thought all would be well;
And long ago he'd sent them on this trip
To Orchomenus, in a rotten ship;
And feeling sure that they were dead or
drowned,
It vexed him much to hear that they'd been
found.

Meanwhile the roguish Cupid, though
unseen,
Brushed close by Jason, touched him, too,
I ween;
With arrow fitted to his tense-drawn bow,
He made an off-hand shot, while kneeling
low,
That pierced the center of Medea's heart;
She felt the shock of Cupid's feathered dart.
The pain was followed by a sweet desire,
And love for Jason coursed her veins like
fire;
A fire unquenched by blood, for we know
well,
Love grows by what it feeds on—blood will
tell.
And now a feast of welcome was
prepared,
For Chalciope's sons, whose lives were
spared;

And Jason, who had brought them safely home,

No more on tempest-driven seas to roam.

The king demanded, then, the eldest son,
To tell him why his will had not been done;
Why he to Orchomenus had not sailed,
And why the royal expedition failed.



HE eldest son replied, with fear and dread:
“O king, the wonder is we are not dead;

The ship you gave us was both weak and old,

And unseaworthy, as I've since been told.
A stress of weather caused her seams to gape,

She filled and sank; we then made our escape,

And on our oars were glad to reach the shore,
Borne by the raging seas, heart-sick and sore.”

“That's nonsense,” cried the king,

“your ship was new,
With planks of oak, and copper-fastened, too;

With brazen bolts and bands her keel was bound

To keelson, stem, and stern-post, strong and sound;

LITTLE FISHES

I saw her built, myself, when but a youth,
And know whereof I speak; and now,
forsooth,

You tell me she was old, and badly found,
And founder'd in a gale, because unsound;
Her planks not worth a copper, and her
seams,

It seems were opened 'twixt her oaken
beams

By stress of weather; whether this is true
Or not, I do not know; the ship was new,
I knew that long ago; and I believe
She struck a rock and opened like a sieve;
If not, how comes it that this other ship
That rescued you, did safely sail and slip
Through this same storm that wrecked
your noble craft,
Her timbers shivered, slivered, fore and
aft?"

"That ship, O king, the staunchest
craft afloat,
Designed by Juno, is a heaven-born boat;
And warriors, half divine, compose her
crew,
The boldest sailors on the ocean blue;
The scions of immortal gods are they,
Whose deeds of valor helped them on their
way;
All dangers of the land and sea they've
passed,
And now at Colchis have arrived at last.

From Greece they come, that famous
far-off land,
With Jason, son of Æson, in command;
He is our kinsman, too, as you may know,
From Cretheus descended—we also.
The rightful king of Iolchos, you see,
Though Pelias now wears his crown;
and he
Has sent brave Jason on this dangerous
quest,
To you, your royal highness, to request
That Phrixus' Golden Fleece be sent to
Greece,
So that fair land may thus obtain release
From Jove's great wrath and fury, which is
due
To grievous wrong which Athamas did
do,
In olden time, to good queen Nephele,
And to her children, Phrixus and Helle."



"UT! wretched caitiff!" cried
the angry king,
"What idle tale is this to me
ye bring?
These vile marauders, men of
no renown,
Are come to take my scepter and my
crown.
Think ye these men, rambunctious though
they be,

LITTLE FISHES

For pelt of Phrixus' ram would brave the sea;

The pelting of the rocks and winds and waves

For several pounds of wool, ye lying knaves!

If at my board ye had not tasted bread,
I'd cut your lying tongues from out your head!"

Then Jason, like a demi-god, arose,
And e'en the king admired his graceful pose;

His form erect, he mildly bowed his head;
Medea hung on every word he said.

"Most gracious king *Æetes*, list I pray,
In justice to a stranger. First, I'll say,
That every word your grandson spoke is true,

And should have had some weight, me-thinks, with you.

The Fleece you hold so lightly, I will own,

To me is everything; in short, my throne
Depends upon its safe return to Greece,
Where it will bring prosperity and peace;
The pelt you deemed just now of little worth,

To me is the one thing in all the earth
I most desire; and if you'll give it me,
My choicest treasures, brought beyond the sea,

Shall all be yours ; bright gems and jewels
rare,
And cups of gold and silver, chased and
fair ;
And arms and armor, dye-stuffs, spices, too,
And many things, I'll freely give to you.



R if you have a foeman to sub-
due,
Our services we freely offer you ;
If you have colonies to pacify,
Or for humanity you wish to try
For territorial expansion, then
I freely offer you my god-like men.
But rest assured of one thing, once for all,
I've vowed to have the Golden Fleece, or
fall."

Now king Æetes was a diplomat ;
His royal cheek was flushed, and he stood
pat ;
Concealing well his anger and his spite,
He said : " Perhaps your cause is just and
right ;
Perhaps you are as brave as you pretend ;
I'll put you to the test, and in the end,
If you perform the task I have in view,
The Golden Fleece I'll freely give to you.

The task is one that I can do with ease,
No other can, not even Hercules.
I have a pair of bulls, whose pedigree
Is of the purest strain, as you'll agree :

LITTLE FISHES

By Vulcan's forge, and out of molten brass,
Their food is fire and flame instead of grass.
These brazen bulls, whose breath is fire and
flame,

Your task will be to render kind and tame;
Put on the yoke, and harness to a plow
With share of adamant; which I'll allow
No one but me can safely do and live,
But you may try; my leave I gladly give.

You next will plough a furrow, straight
and true,
Across the field of Mars—as I can do—
Then sow, not grain, but teeth of serpent
dread,

The serpent slain by Cadmus, so 't is said;
And from these teeth your crop will surely
rise

The self-same day, perhaps to your surprise;

A crop of fierce and warlike men will grow
From out the furrow, armed from head to
toe.

Then single-handed, you these men must
slay—

Then with the Golden Fleece you'll sail
away."

Thus spoke the king and laughed within
his sleeve;
But Jason said: "Æetes, by your leave,
I'll try the task to-morrow, though I die."
And from the kingly presence quick did hie.



E wandered to the garden, much depressed,
And in a thick-set grove sat down to rest.
He thought the Golden Fleece could ne'er be won,
And sighed to think his race so nearly run.

Medea, when she heard the task proposed—

A task impossible, the king supposed—
Resolved that she would take brave Jason's part,
And aid him with her magic spells and art;
For love of Jason she would thwart the king—

O, love is such a strange and curious thing.
And in that time, so long ago, we're told,
The old, old story even then was old.
But though the story may be old, 't would seem

It's always new and bright as love's young dream;

And Cupid, after all these many years,
Is still a roguish boy, all smiles or tears.

Medea followed Jason to the grove,
For love had made her bold, and haply strove

Against her maiden modesty; and so,
She found poor Jason in the depths of woe.

LITTLE FISHES

"Forgive me, sir," she said, "if I, poor maid,
Of all our household seem the least afraid
To speak of gratitude for your brave deed,
In giving help in time of direst need
To Chalciope's sons, who bid me say
How much they grieved to hear the king,
to-day,

Impose a task so difficult on you;
A task which no one but the king can do."

"O, fairest maid," then Jason did reply,
"With your kind sympathy, I'll gladly die;
If so the gods have deemed that it should be,
Death will be welcome with your sympathy."

"Brave sir, it grieves me much, this cruel thing,
That by my father, Æetes the king,
Is thus imposed on you who joy did give
To me and mine; that those thought dead,
still live.

O would that I might perish in your stead;
Alas! 't would be far better thus," she said.

"O, lovely maiden, if within your heart
You have a thought of me, 't were hard to part;

But if that thought is fraught with love for
me,
Then gladly will I die, for I love thee."
Thus Jason spoke, and took her lovely hand;



EDEA tried her feelings
to command.

Then smiling through
her tears of joy, she
said,

As Jason to a seat the
fair girl led:

"Why talk of death,
when we should strive to live;

If you to me your promise fair will give
To love me always, and be true to me,
Then I will help in this extremity."

"O fairest maid in all the world," he said,
If I do live, then surely we will wed;
You'll share my throne in Greece, beyond
the sea;

I swear by all the gods to love but thee."

"Know then," she said, "I have a sub-
tile charm,
That can, and will, preserve you from all
harm;

With aid that I by magic can invoke,
The brazen oxen you may safely yoke;
Their flaming breath will bring no harm to
thee;

And harnessed to the plow, as you will see,
Straightway across the field of Mars they'll
go,

And plow a furrow straight, and deep also.
And when the dreaded serpent's teeth
you've sown,

LITTLE FISHES

'T will not be long before your crop is grown—
A band of fierce and warlike, well-armed men,
Whom, by my magic you will slay, and then—
Then with the Golden Fleece you'll sail away,
And soon forget Medea and *Æa*."

"When I forget thee, dearest love," said he,

"May I be swallowed by the ruthless sea;
In Pluto's realm may I be doomed to pine,
And all the tortures of the damned, be mine.
Should I depart, love, with the Golden Fleece,
I'll carry you, my promised wife, to Greece;
And there, my wedded wife, you'll reign with me,
The proudest, happiest queen in Thessaly.
I swear by all the gods, this solemn vow:
To love you always, as I love you now."

Then Jason sealed the compact with a kiss;
Medea's heart was full; unspoken bliss
More eloquent than words, shone in her face,
As tears and sighs and fears to smiles gave place.

"Dear Jason—for you're very dear to me,"

Medea said, and blushed to speak so free:



T dawn to-morrow, meet
me 'neath the oak,"—
In whispers, now, the lovely
maiden spoke:—
“ The oak beside the shrine
of Hecate,
There I'll unfold my plan, for love of thee.
And now, I must be gone; and you are free
Until to-morrow's dawn—but think of me.”
One long-drawn kiss—then from his side
she fled,
Swift, 'neath the fragrant trees, nor turned
her head.

Then Jason rose, as from a pleasant
dream,
And strode across the plain to Phasis'
stream.

Then soon aboard the Argo went in haste;
The heroes all assembled in her waist;
To them he told his story, and his task,
And many were the questions all did ask.

Said Idas: “ Let us try the force of arms,
And not depend on magic spells and charms;
Talk not to me of fierce fire-breathing bull.”

Said Peleus: “ Brave Jason's got a pull,
A pull, I think will win, from his report.”

“ He'll surely win with such a friend
at court,”
Said Atalanta, bravest of her kind;
“ Now mind, my friends, that when a
woman's mind

LITTLE FISHES

Has formed a plan, with love as her reward,
You'll find that plan more mighty than the sword."

Then Meleager, taking up his cue
From Atalanta, said, with vigor, too:
"If Jason wants to play the hayseed act,
And plow and sow and reap, in point of fact,
To raise a crop of men; it comes to pass,
It's all the same—all flesh we know is grass;

The time will come when all will plow by steam,

So let him drive his fierce fire-breathing team;

And heads of men or grass he'll surely clip—

Whatever man doth sow, that shall he rip."

"I hope," said Pollux, "none will feel afraid
For Jason's sake, nor be the least dismayed;
This maid for Jason has her aid proposed,
And he's proposed to her; the bargain's closed;

And by this bargain count her of the crew,
And very glad we'll be to have her, too.

And then you all remember what was said
By Phineus, the prophet, on this head:
That Venus would assist us in the end;
Be sure that in our need she'll prove our friend."



OU're mighty right, my boy," said Orpheus,
We'll gladly welcome her as one of us;
A good musician, too,
as I've heard tell;
So fair, so wise, soprano, too, as well;
She'll take the place of Hylas in the choir,
Perhaps, in time, she'll learn to play the lyre."

And then a feast was held, and gen'rous wine
Did cheer the hearts of these brave men, divine.
In jeweled cup they pledged bold Jason's bride;
With song and story cast all care aside.
Next morn, at dawn, Medea, in her car,
Arrayed resplendent as the morning star,
Attended by her maidens, secretly,
Drove quickly to the shrine of Hecate.
The birds were piping merry roundelay,
And singing matin hymns of love and praise.
The maidens passed within the temple door,
And there, with secret rites and prayers,
implore
Great Hecate to give Medea power
To work her charms with magic plant and flower.

LITTLE FISHES

And now, Medea, 'neath the old oak tree,

For Jason watched and waited patiently.
Not long to wait, for soon he came in haste;
His arm was soon around her slender waist;
And breathing words of love and constancy,
He kissed away her tears most tenderly.

"O, Jason list, for time now flies apace,"
Medea said, love shining in her face:
"This precious drug—hide quick beneath
your cloak."—

He took it from her hand, e'en as she spoke—

"'T is from a two-stalked plant distilled, that grew
Where fell the drops of blood, like morning dew;

Dropped from the eagle's beak that ruthless tore

The liver of Prometheus." And o'er
Her heart she pressed her hands, and gasped
for breath,

For fear that all might end in Jason's death.

Then Jason drew her to his manly breast,
And lovingly her golden locks caressed.
With cheering words he kissed away her woe.

With arms clasped round his neck she whispered low:



T early dawn go to the river side,
And all alone, bathe in its flowing tide;
And while the morning star doth faintly gleam,
Then mix the drug with water from the stream;
And with the magic potion, as with oil,
Anoint thy body well; it will not soil,
But fragrant as a flower upon the lea;
A match for deathless gods then shalt thou be.
“And sprinkle well thy sword and shield and spear,
No danger then, dear Jason, need you fear;
And e'en the brazen oxen’s flaming breath,
That otherwise would cause your instant death,
Will harmless prove to thee, my love. And then
When from the ground arise the warlike men,
With sword and buckler, spear and javelin;
Do thou a great stone cast amidst the din
Of clashing swords and shields, for then will they
Each on the other turn, and kill and slay.
Then mayest thou with thy charmed spear and sword

LITTLE FISHES

Let out the brief lives of the earth-born
horde.
This done, thy task is ended. Now good-
bye,
Thy life is spared, though even I may die.
To-morrow, then, thou'lt bear a charmed
life;
And after, should we live, thy promised
wife,
I'll go with thee to sunny, far-off Greece,
And there I hope to merit love and peace."
 "My own sweet love," said Jason, "we
 will pray
The gods may soon vouchsafe the happy
day."
A loving, fond embrace, and heart to heart,
A honied kiss—and then the lovers part.
 Behold next day upon the field of Mars,
The king and courtiers in their warlike cars.
The household of the king in gilded wain,
Drove through the gate, and out upon the
plain.
And then Medea, fairest sight by far,
Attended by her maidens in her car.
A throng of soldiers to the field repair,



By these dread brazen bulls with flaming breath.



ND now the grandest sight of all appears—
The Argo, sailing proudly, while the cheers
Of Jason and his heroes rent the air;
They came to conquer,

came to do or dare.

The mighty ship sailed swiftly up the stream,
The morning breeze blew fresh, abaft the beam;

And fifty oars in perfect time were plied,
Like fifty giant arms along her side.

Ancæus, putting down the helm, she veered
Into the wind; then for the shore he steered.
The sail was lowered and furled upon the yard,

The oarsmen still were rowing fast and hard,

Until at length the river bank they reach,
And backing ship, they stopped beside the beach,

And safely moored the Argo in the lee,
The proudest ship that ever sailed the sea.

The heroes leaped ashore with perfect ease,
And formed in solid phalanx 'neath the trees;

LITTLE FISHES

Then boldly marched, with Jason at their head,
The very earth did tremble at their tread.
Then marching to the chariot of the king,
Gave three Greek cheers that made the welkin ring;
The welkin rang, and rang again, I've heard,
But badly cracked remained from cheer the third.
The Colchian welkin ne'er will ring again,
'T was sorely damaged by these loud-voiced men.

"Æetes, let me introduce my friends,"
Said Jason, anxious then to make amends;
They, doffing helmets, gave their college yell,

Old Chiron's college yell, and did it well;
So well, in fact, that birds for miles around,
With bursted galls, dropped dead upon the ground.

The king, astonished, rose up in his car,
The yell reverberating, near and far.

"I'm pleased to meet you, gentlemen," said he,
"But don't repeat that yell; it don't agree
With thin-skinned people, like we Colchians are;

Your fine Greek chorus is too loud, by far.



OW, Jason, if your will
is still inclined
To yoke the brazen
oxen, you will find
That everything is ready
for the test;

That you decline, I really think is best;
For I, and I alone, the task can do,
Be warned in time; it's certain death for
you."

Then Idas quickly spoke: "O, gracious
king,
We would n't miss the show for anything;
'T would be too bad to disappoint the crowd,
And Jason, he will do your oxen proud;
For he's a bully boy, I'd have you know,
Your brazen bulls with him will prove too
slow."

Then Pollux spoke, the famous pugilist,
And to his helmet raised his brawny fist:
"Should Jason smash your bulls, most
gracious sire,

And by his mettle, quench their metal ire,
We'll all chip in and buy another pair,
Or send them straight to Vulcan for repair;
The straight, you know, will both pair
surely beat.

Or Jason, flushed with pride in their defeat,
Will order three, from brazen kine, you
see—

Three of a kind, then surely there will be."

LITTLE FISHES

"You speak in Grecian idioms," said the king,
"A Grecian idiom is a stupid thing.
But talk is cheap; to business now we'll turn,
That I'm a business man, you soon will learn;
This is my busy day; it's getting late,
And time and tide, you know, for no man wait.
As Jason still insists the bulls to yoke,
Perhaps he'll find, too late, it is no joke.
You Greeks may nod and laugh and smile and wink;
That he will yoke the oxen—I don't think.
But should he do so, and perform the task—
Then everything is his that he may ask;
The Fleece of Gold, a paltry thing, at best,
My crown and scepter, throne, and all the rest;
When Greece her knees a suppliant bent,
you know;
A suppliant bent—then grease her knees,
just so;
A Colchian school-boy chestnut, I'll admit,
But one that this occasion seems to fit.

"Here, Jason, hold your helmet, take these teeth,
The seed you are to sow upon this heath;
And when the seed's into the furrow sown,

Not long you 'll have to wait before it 's
grown;
A crop of fierce and well-armed men, and
brave,
Whom you must reap and bind, your life
to save;
Remember, he who by the plow would
thrive,
Must either hold the plow, himself, or drive;
As you 'll do both, why you can plainly see,
The thing 's impossible—except for me."



"ROT out your bulls," said Jason,
let 's begin,
A thing begun 's half done; I 'm
sure to win.
Your bulls are muzzle-loaders—obsolete;
I 'll draw their fire; 't is quite an easy feat.
I 'm made of pure asbestos, and fire-proof;
A perfect salamander—web and woof.
The warmest member in the crowd; that 's
right;
There 'll be a hot time in the town, to-night."



ERHAPS my bulls are not so
very hot;
You 'll find them sizzling, in
the corner lot;
Also the adamantine plow and yoke."
The king laughed in his sleeve, while yet
he spoke.

LITTLE FISHES

Then Jason thrust his sword into the sod,
And on it hung his helmet, like a hod,
Wherein repos'd the serpent's teeth for seed,
And for the brazen oxen went with speed.
And as he passed Medea, lovely maid,
She whispered: "Jason, do not be afraid."
The women all admired his yellow hair;
They'd never seen a mortal half so fair;
They threw him kisses as he disappeared,
And prayed for his success; half hoped,
half feared.

But what is this that caused the king to
look!

While all his frame as with an ague shook!
'T is Jason with the oxen and the plow,
As to the yoke their brazen heads they bow;
While from their mouths and nostrils sheets
of flame

Extended far behind; but all the same,
And unconcerned, brave Jason plodded on,
His team obedient to his voice, anon.
And pulling bravely, with their might and
main,

They plowed a furrow straight across the
plain.

"Gee, Bright! Whoa, Buck!" cried
Jason, as with gad,
He whacked their sides. The women folks
were glad.

"Hurrah for Jason!" cried the heroes then,
And such a shout will ne'er be heard again.



HEN: "What's the matter with brave Jason, now?"
Cried Meleager, as he watched the plow.
"O! he's all right!" responded all the crew

The king looked wild—'t was all that he could do.

Then Jason, running nimbly 'cross the sward,

Took up his helmet; buckled on his sword.
Then in the furrow sowed the serpent's teeth,
And with the plow he turned them underneath;

And in the corner lot at length did stop,
Turned out his team; returned to reap his crop.

Already in the furrow, bursting through,
Brass helmets, pushing up like mushrooms,
grew;

Soon followed arms and bodies, legs, and then,
Behold the band of fierce and warlike men!
Well-armed with sword and javelin and spear,

They clashed their shields, and showed no sign of fear.

Then Jason, shouting loudly, waved his sword;

LITTLE FISHES

With flashing eyes they rushed, with one accord,
To slay the bold intruder; but they found
He parried all their blows, and stood his ground.
Then Jason catching up a heavy stone,
With all his strength the missile then was thrown,
And struck to earth two warriors in the crowd,
Who on each other turned with curses loud;
And striking right and left, were soon engaged
With all the others—so the battle waged.
And Jason, slashing with his magic sword,
Soon all had bit the dust, of this vile horde.
While shouts and cries of victory resound,
His comrades lifted Jason from the ground,
And on their shoulders bore him to the king,
And cried: "Lo, here the conqueror, we bring!
And since he has performed his wondrous task,
The Golden Fleece, alone, is all we ask.
Although you deemed it but a paltry thing,
We prize it as the ransom of a king.
You promised him your crown, and scepter,
too,
But these, Æetes, we will leave with you."





HE king, with rage, could
scarce contain himself;
Of all his choicest trea-
ures, goods and pelf,
The Golden Fleece he
prized the most of all;
Some plan he must invent, some way fore-
stall
These loud-mouthed Greeks; he cared not
for his word;
That he should keep his promise seemed
absurd.
“I do not understand this thing,” he
said;
His face turned pale, and then again turned
red.
“I’ve been hoodoo’d and bunco’d, that is
plain;
My bulls were hypnotized; the earth-born
slain;
But each one slew the other, which was
hard;
Each man was hoisted by his own petard.
But since by some vile trick the task is
done,
And Jason thinks the Golden Fleece he’s
won;
I’m willing, now, the claim to arbitrate,
As is the custom in affairs of state.
I’ll choose two men, and they may choose
a third,

LITTLE FISHES

To them the matter then will be referred.
As *ex-officio* I'll add my name;
We'll thoroughly investigate the claim.
We'll send for men and papers—that's the
way;
And then, when through, report without
delay.
But first, a protocol will be prepared,
Wherein my final terms will be declared.
To this state paper each his name must
sign,
The names of all concerned—excepting
mine.
Now, one thing more I'd have you un-
derstand:
The Golden Fleece will never leave this
land.
A mascot true, it is my greatest pride,
Which Phrixus willed to me before he
died;
Dyed in the wool with precious virgin gold,
A sacred, priceless thing, to have and hold.
My title's good; there's not the slightest
flaw;
Possession is nine points in Colchian law.
Therefore, possess yourselves in perfect
peace,
You never will possess the Golden Fleece."

And saying which he quickly drove
away.

The Argonauts had not a word to say.



HEN came Medea, with
a faithful maid;
She beckoned Jason to
her side, and said:
“ My father’s shameful
words I blushed to
hear;
But we’ll outwit him,
Jason, never fear.

At midnight do not fail to come to me,
Where last we met—the shrine of Hecate.
Then with my help you ’ll take the Golden
Fleece,

And then set sail, at once, for far-off Greece.
Have everything prepared for instant flight;
For I leave home, with you, this very night.
Already I’m suspected by the king,
For helping you, to-day, to do this thing.
And should you then the Fleece take from
its tree,

A shameful, certain death, ’t would mean
for me,
Should I remain behind when you were
fled.”

“ My faithful, promised wife,” then Jason
said,
“ I will not sail without you, never fear;
You are to me most precious, fond and dear.
My love for you will only cease with life,
And some day you will be my cherished
wife.”

LITTLE FISHES

She pressed his hand, then said: "Do not forget;
Good-bye! to-night—alone—where last we met."

Then in her car the crowd she soon outran.
And Jason to the heroes told the plan.

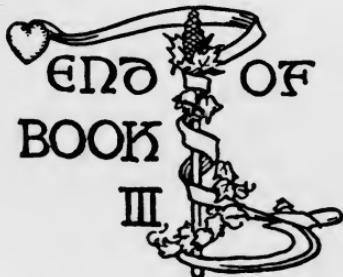
Aboard the ship they sang a merry tune,
Right glad they were to leave the place so soon.

Though Idas said he did not think it right,
To sneak away without a chance to fight.
To have his way, he said he'd sack the town,

Then take the Golden Fleece, and smash
Æetes' crown.

But better, wiser, counsel still prevailed,
And down the stream the Argo swiftly sailed.

Again they moored her in the sheltered bight,
And then prepared all things for instant flight.



ARGUMENT.

Æetes discovers all; but meantime Medea has fled to the Argonauts; and by her aid they have taken the Fleece and gone. Absyrtus, son of Æetes, gives chase; but coming up with them is treacherously slain, at the mouth of the Ister, by Jason and Medea; whereat Zeus is angry, but Hera ever befriends them. Thence they come to Circe to be purified of the murder; and they pass through "the Wandering Rocks," and through Scylla and Charybdis, and past the Sirens, all save Butes; and come unto Corcyra, where Medea is saved by Alcinous from the pursuit of the Colchians, and is wedded to Jason. Next they are driven to the Syrtis off Libya, and suffer greatly from thirst. Here Canthus and Mopsus meet their doom; and the rest are saved by Triton and sent upon their way to Crete, where Talos withstands them, only to fall before Medea's magic.

After this they make a straight run to Ægina, and so without further adventure to their home in Thessaly.—
(Adapted from the Scholiasts.)

*The dreadful dragon, coiled about the tree
Where hung the Golden Fleece;*



BOOK IV.



T midnight, at th' appointed time and place,
Medea waited; tears
ran down her face.
The thought of leaving home
was sad, indeed;
'Twixt love and duty, sore
her heart did bleed.

"O! would that Jason ne'er had come,"
she said;

"O! would that I, unhappy maid, were
dead!"

But Jason coming, kissed away her tears;
With soothing words soon banished all her
fears.

"O! Jason, I am leaving all for you;
My childhood's home; my faithful maids,
and true;

My father, mother, brother, sister dear;
My native land—and all for love sincere.
For love of you, dear Jason, all I leave,
For in your love I trust; in you believe.
Henceforth my all—my very life you 'll be;
And will you love me always—only me?"

"Sweet love," said Jason, "by the gods
I swear,
No one with you my true heart's love will
share;
This day, my sweet, you saved my worth-
less life;

Henceforth it's yours—my faithful, promised wife."



THEN Jason brushed aside her golden hair, And sealed his vow upon her forehead fair. Around his neck her white arms then she flung, And to his tall and graceful form she clung, E'en like a vine that clingeth to a rock, Though countless storms may rage and tempests shock.

She laid her tear-stained cheek upon his breast, And gently, he her golden locks caressed; When starting up, as if from sleep, she gasped;

"Time flies apace!" and then his hand she clasped,

And gliding swiftly 'neath the silent stars, She led him to the sacred grove of Mars; And there the wondrous sight did he behold, The goal of all his hopes—the Fleece of Gold!

Its dazzling light resplendent shone around; But underneath there lay upon the ground, The dreadful dragon, coiled about the tree Where hung the Golden Fleece; its guardian, he.

His countless folds were clad with shield-like scales;

LITTLE FISHES

And sickle-like, and sharp, his long, curved
nails.

His red and slimy mouth was opened wide,
With rows of teeth like spear-heads, side by
side;

While from his yellow nostrils, snoring
loud,

His sickly, noisome breath arose, a cloud.

"Haste, Jason, do not be the least afraid!
Quick! seize the Golden Fleece!" Medea
said.

"The dreadful beast, who never slept before,
I charmed to sleep an hour ago, or more.

The magic potion soon will lose its spell;
Quick! seize the Fleece, and all will yet be
well!"

She placed her sandaled foot upon its head,
And crooning softly to the dragon, said:

"Sleep on, O dreaded, fearful beast,
sleep on;

May dreams, in fancy, bring thee pleasures
gone;

Sleep on, O monster, while the owl doth fly;
While kind moon-goddess Hecate is nigh."

And o'er the dragon's eye-lids then she
poured

The soporific drug—he louder snored.

Then Jason lightly stepped from fold to fold,
And from the tree he took the Fleece of Gold.
As in his arms he bore the long-sought prize,
The monster dragon opened wide his eyes,

And from his throat emitted such a roar,
The earth did quake for miles, from shore
to shore.



their way.

And thence across the plain unto the ship;
Then quick aboard—the crew the cables
slip.

And down the river soon were rowing fast,
Till near the river's mouth they stopped, at
last.

Then Jason, standing on the vessel's stern,
Addressed the heroes, who, their faces turn
To where he stood, Medea by his side,
The fairest maid in all the world, so wide.

"O, brothers, many dangers we have
shared;
Our lives from many perils hath been
spared;

Until, at last, the object of our quest
Hath been secured; and I am doubly blest.
This is the happiest moment of my life,
For you've obtained the Fleece, and I a wife.
To guard her safely, now will be your care,

LITTLE FISHES

For some day she as queen, my throne will share.

And bear me witness; by the gods I vow!
To love her always, as I love her now.
Without her aid the Golden Fleece would be,
Still guarded by the dragon 'neath the tree."
Thus Jason spoke. Then Peleus replied:
"O, Jason, with our lives we'll guard your bride."

And then Medea, stretching out her hand,
Cried: "Heroes! look! O look upon the land!

The beacon fires are lit on every hill;
Hoist up your sail, and quickly let it fill.
The warning bell is clanging in the tower;
Bend to your oars, and pray the gods for power!

My father is alarmed; he knows I've fled!
And ta'en the Golden Fleece!" Medea said.

And as she spoke, behold upon the strand,
The chariot of the king; and in his hand
A flaming torch, that like a meteor flew;
And urging on his horses passed from view

Around the point below; and followed then,
A multitude of horses, cars and men.
While up the river, sailors loudly cried;
Manned sails and oars, to catch the ebbing tide.



And as the early dawn began to break,
A hundred ships soon followed Argo's wake.



WITH sail and oars the Argo
swiftly sped;
But at the river's mouth,
not far ahead,
A huge ship blocked the
channel; while on shore,
An army of a thousand men, or more,
Were waiting for the Argo and her crew.
Then Jason gave his orders, quickly, too:
"Along the gunwale of the landward
side,
Let all the shields of first bench men be tied!
And brace them strong and firm; then on
his spear
Let each man's helmet just above, appear!
While down below the men their oars will
ply!
Then those on shore will shoot their arrows,
high.
All, save the oarsmen, man the starboard
side,
To fight the ship that bars our way!" he
cried.
Then Juno sent, abaft, a welcome gale,
That fiercely blew, and filled the swelling
sail.
But up the river, blew the other way;
Drove back the Colchian fleet in dire dismay.

LITTLE FISHES

The Argo forged ahead with wind and tide,
The queen of all the seas, and Jason's pride.
Then bearing down upon the ship, ahead,
Bold Jason turned to Ancæus, and said:

"That ship we'll sink! there is no other
way;
She blocks the channel 'twixt the sea and
bay;
'T is Hobson's choice; we'll ram her in the
side!
And sink her where she lays, whate'er
betide.

We've got the push! our stem is solid oak!
We'll crush her like an egg-shell!" thus he
spoke.

Ancæus bid them row both fast and
hard;
And to the breeze to brace and square the
yard.
The Colchian ship was anchored bow and
stern;
The Argo from her straight course did not
turn;
But crashing, smashing, cut the ship in
twain;
Sailed o'er the wreck, and out upon the
main.
The Colchian ship was fairly cut in two,
And sank like lead, beneath the waters blue.
But ere she sunk, Absyrtus, on the stern,
With angry eyes, Medea did discern.



ILE sister! false one!
traitress!" then he said;
Medea answered not—
she cut him dead.
I know some ancient
poets do aver—
In justice, though, with
them I can't concur—

That Jason, or Medea, maybe both,
Did really slay Absyrtus, nothing loth.

Now when the Colchian ship did dis-
appear,
The Argo's crew did loudly shout and cheer.
"How's that!" cried Castor, shouting with
his might;
Cried Pollux, just as loud: "It's out of
sight!"

Then king Æetes, in his car, on shore,
Did tear his hair, and bitter oaths he swore;
But all in vain; the Argo sailed away,
And soon was lost to sight, far down the
bay.

The best laid plans of mice or men, you see,
On sea or solid land, oft gang agley.

The breeze blew fresh and fair; they
sailed all night;
They swiftly sailed until the morning light
Broke thick and gray, and then a heavy fog
Fell like a pall; they drifted like a log.
For now a calm fell on the silent sea,
And three long days they drifted, helplessly.

LITTLE FISHES

The heavy mist the mast-head hid from view;
They lost their course; they knew not what to do.

At length, at dawn, a lambent, rosy light
Shone all about the prow, a welcome sight;
And from the figure-head was heard a voice
That caused their hearts, despondent, to rejoice:

"Brave heroes, rouse ye from despair
and doubt!

Your ship is safe and sound; your arms
are stout.

Your journey home will be some time de-
layed;

Accept whatever comes—be not afraid.
The fog, and mist, and gloom, by Juno sent,

Hath saved your lives, and proved her good intent.

While shrouded by the mist and fog, so meet,

The angry king and all the Colchian fleet
Pass'd haply by, and at the straits doth wait,

To bar your passage through the narrow gate.

And now another route you must pursue;
For rivers, you must leave the ocean blue;
And overland awhile, your journey take;



HEN in the sea, again, you 'll
leave your wake,
Until, at last, you 'll sight
the shores of Greece,
And all will end in perfect
joy and peace.

But, now, due north your present course
will be,
Instead of east; be brave and follow me!"
Then rose a breeze from off the southern
shore,
Dispersed the fog; and doubted they no
more.
Carambis left aport, and far astern,
Ahead the steady, radiant light did burn;
They followed, day and night, the rosy
gleam,
Until they entered Ister's mighty stream.
They entered on the flood tide, high and
strong,
And swiftly 'tween the banks were whirled
along.
At length, at night, they anchored in the
stream,
And strange, indeed, did everything now
seem.
No more was felt the salt breeze of the sea;
No more was heard the purl of waves, a-lee.
But swift and silent flowed the mighty tide;
While forests hemmed them in on either
side.

LITTLE FISHES

And farther up the stream they rowed
each day,
Until the salty tide had lost its sway,
And fresh and sweet the river water ran.
Good fishing now they found, and soon
began
To lure the finny tribe from Ister's flood,
By hook or crook, or any way they could;
With bait or spoon, or artificial fly,
To catch the biggest fish they all did try.
Medea watched the sport with some surprise;
The gentle art was new to Colchian eyes.
With Jason's aid she soon essayed a cast,
And hooked a fish as long as half the mast.
She played it with great skill, it must be said;
She played it 'till the fish seemed nearly dead;
Then Jason deftly gaffed it with his spear,
And all the crew joined in a hearty cheer.
'T was ever thus, in fishing bout or match,
The novice sometimes scores the biggest catch.
Whate'er the sport, in feather, fur or fin,
The modest tenderfoot will sometimes win.
We call it "luck," whatever that may mean,
But luck or "chance" is born of skill, I ween.



O in and try your luck,"
or "Now's your chance,"
Is often said, our courage to enhance.
And if we win, can it be truly said
That luck or chance,
not skill, came out ahead?

The expert angler's often asked, forsooth:

"What luck?" when patient, skillful work,
in truth,
Hath filled his creel, in which chance had no part;
'T is such things break the honest angler's heart.

Or quoth the upstart, finger on his nose:
"You caught them on the fly, sir, I suppose?"

"Of course," the honest angler then replies.
"The barnyard hackle is the best of flies;
And that you used, sir, just as like as not"—

He feels like killing him upon the spot.

Medea caught the largest fish that day,
As woman sometimes will when there's a way.

She bore her honors meekly—did not brag—

The gentle doe at times outstrips the stag.

LITTLE FISHES

Now steadily up stream the Argo sped;
Propelled by lusty arms, she forged ahead.
But swifter, clearer, now the river flowed;
And harder still the god-like oarsmen
rowed.

At night was often heard the lion's roar;
By day strange beasts were seen along the
shore;

To these they gave no heed, nor thought of
harm;

Such sights and sounds to them caused no
alarm.

But now their hearts were filled with fear
and dread—

A mighty cataract was seen ahead.

And foam-flecked water; eddies every-
where,

Caused every heart to sink in grim despair.

And then discouraged by the fearsome
sight,

They anchored in a quiet, sheltered bight.

Then Jason and Ancaeus went ashore,

With Argus, Lynceus, and several more.

Together then they climbed the wooded
hill,

And up the river's bank they journeyed
still,

Until they reached, at length, the high
divide,

And saw a river on the other side.

A welcome sight; it flowed the other way;



"'T will bear us to the sea, again!" they say.



RETURNING then the joyous news to tell,
They found a wide and well-worn road, as well.

"The task is not a hard one," Argus said;

"On wheels we 'll move the Argo to the head
Of this divide; and then when that is done,
'T will be dead easy, and no end of fun,
To wheel the Argo down the other side,
And in the other river safely glide."

"You 're mighty right," then Jason, smiling,
said,
"I always thought you 'd wheels in that
great head."

And now for days a busy scene ensued.
Great trees, and small, were felled and sawed
and hewed.

A timber cradle for the Argo made,
With wheels and axles strongly built and
stayed.

Then in the water, down the sloping beach,
They ran the car, until the ship they reach,
And safely floated her within the cage;
Then with the twisted cables all engage,
And hauled the Argo out upon the shore;
Despair and doubt then troubled them no
more.

LITTLE FISHES

Then up the hill they labored, slow but sure;
No task so great but they could well endure.
And so they reached the top—the water-shed;

"We'll rest until to-morrow," Jason said.
At early dawn they started down the slope;
Each heart was now inspired with joy and hope.

At length they safely reached the river side;
At length they launched the Argo on its tide.
Then with the wheels and timbers of the wain

The heroes built an altar, once again,
To offer sacrifice and hymns of praise
To Juno, who had brought them through the maze

Of deep and dark despair to this bright spot—

That she had guided them, they doubted not.

The hunters hied them forth with spear and bow,

And through the forest wandered to and fro;
Brave Arcas, Atalanta, Idas, too,
And Meleager, searched the forest through.
At length, a lordly stag At'lanta spied;
She drove an arrow through his tawny hide;

It pierced his heart, of course, she could not fail—

A hart he was, from branching horns to tail.

He dropped dead in his tracks, for so, also,
His tracks were always under him, you know.



ND then a bull, both tall and big of girth,
With lowered horns, began to paw the earth;
His glaring eye the hunters did defy;

But Idas shot an arrow through his eye.
“I hit the bullseye, plump and fair,” he said;
“It pierced the bovine brain—the bull is dead;

The boss of all the herd, no doubt was he;
The bull of all the woods is slain, by me!”

A huge boar next came rushing through the wood;

Erect upon his back his bristles stood.
His foam-flecked tusks he bared with piggish pride;

But Arcas’ spear went crashing through his side.

“That’s not so bad!” quoth Arcas to the rest;

“I bore his taunt as long as I thought best.
The greatest boar of earth, as you’ll agree,
With neatness and dispatch was slain by me!”

LITTLE FISHES



JUST then an eagle bold dropped
from the sky,
And Meleager let an arrow fly,
That cleft the great bird's skull,
and down he fell.

Then Meleager's heart with pride did swell;
And then he said: "Now, how is that for
high?"

I shot him on the wing—good shot say I."
Then Atalanta, smiling, sweetly said:
"It seems to me you shot him on the head!"



HUS chaffing, boasting, in a
merry vein,
The hunters to the ship returned
again.

The bull for sacrifice was then prepared,
To thank the gods their lives had all been
spared;

To Juno, faithful guardian, all did pray,
To shield and guard them on their home-
ward way.

The altar flames leaped high above the trees,
The smoke ascended on the evening breeze;
The omen was propitious, thank the gods—
So long as they were happy—what's the
odds.

So down Eridanus, the river, sailed
The good ship Argo, which had never failed
To serve the heroes well, by sea or land;
A gallant ship; a noble, gallant band.





OW as they reached the river's mouth, one day,
The water boiled and bubbled, strange to say;
And clouds of steam rose hissing on the air,
And altogether seemed a queer affair.

"This is the place," Medea said, "where fell

Young Phaethon; I've heard my father tell
How he one day the sun-car drove; alas!
That such a thing should ever come to pass.

The horses ran away—came near the earth,
And set the world on fire—his life was worth
Far less than all the world; so mighty Jove,
While seated on his throne, in heaven above,
Sent crashing through the air a fiery dart
That fired young Phaethon from out the cart,

And sent him scorching in the sea below—
That's why the water boils and bubbles so.
He's burning still; of that there is no doubt,
For he can never, never, be put out."

Next day they reached the river's mouth,
and then,
Behold the glorious, open sea, again!
A welcome sight, indeed, to all the crew,
As bending to the breeze, the Argo flew.
The island of Æthalia reached, at last,

LITTLE FISHES

They moored the Argo safely, firm and fast.

A few days here the heroes spent in port;
They passed the time in manly games and sport.

While Jason and Medea walked one day,
The goddess Iris met them on their way.
She told them they to Circe's isle must hie,
And she their blood-stained hands would purify.

Absyrtus' death was still laid at their door,
So they for Circe's favor must implore.

Next morning early saw them on their way;

The Argo bounding gayly o'er the bay.
The high Tyrsenian cliffs were in full view,
Their amethystine tints above the blue.
And sailing onward through the starlit night,

Next day the isle of Circe hove in sight.
Anon, they anchored near the little isle;
The crew with music did the time beguile,
While Jason and Medea stepped ashore,
With more of dread than they had felt before.

For Circe was Æetes' sister, dear;
No wonder that their hearts were filled with fear.

Yet true, she was Medea's favorite aunt;
They hoped that she their prayers would freely grant.



Now Circe was a sorceress, half divine,
Who, by a touch, turned all men into swine.
Medea, knowing this, had come prepared;
A knowledge of the magic art she shared
With Circe, who had taught her years ago,
The art divine, and things she ought to know.

In Jason's tunic then she placed with care,
Some withered leaves, and safely pinned them there.

"The Pontic Moly, sure and sacred charm;
Whoever wears it ne'er will come to harm;
A foil to sorcery and magic art,"
She said, "Now keep it safely o'er your heart.

So long as you possess the sacred twig,
By Circe, you can not be made a pig."

And as they walked they saw great droves of swine
That once were men; and oft did they repine
In grunts and squeals their low and abject state;
And some, no doubt, deserved a better fate.
Then as they neared the center of the isle,

LITTLE FISHES

The sorc'ress met them with a pleasant smile;

She bade them welcome to her palace hall,
Where Jason and Medea told her all:
About the Golden Fleece, and Jason's quest;
About the brazen bulls, and all the rest;
How king Æetes did repudiate
His royal word and promise, made in state;
Then, how the Golden Fleece they took at night;

And then appealed to Circe's sense of right.

"But how about Absyrtus' death?"
asked she,

"For this you've come to be absolved by me."

"My dear aunt Circe," then Medea said,
"We do not know if he is already dead.
A ship was in our way as we passed out;
We rammed and sunk this ship without a doubt;

My brother stood upon her quarter-deck,
And called me names, from his part of the wreck.

Now, whether he was drowned, or swam ashore,

We do not know, and cannot tell you more."

Now Circe thought it best, at all events,
To purify them both, in every sense,
Of any guilt that might attach to them;
'T would do no harm; 't would clear their skirts; ahem!

Within her secret chamber they withdrew,
And there she purified the happy two.
This course was necessary to appease
The wrath of Jove, incensed by Æetes.



HEN Circe showed them around th' enchanted place;
The beastly swine, once of the human race,
That by their squeals and grunts did her implore,
To change them back to human form, once more.
Then Circe said: "Observe those two black swine
That hang their heads; unceasingly they whine.
The one a fish-hog is, and when a man
He fished for count, and always filled his can
With big and little, fingerlings, as well;
Then, boasting of his catch, great lies did tell.
The other one's a game-hog, nasty brute,
Who, all day long, did nothing else but shoot;
With bow and spear he roamed the forests wide,
And potted every living thing he spied.

LITTLE FISHES

Now there's a spotted hog, both lank and lean,

Who, as a man, was just as bad and mean.
With net and spear, and torch, he fished at night,

And slept by day, for fear Diana might
Surprise him at his lawless, so-called sport,
And hale him off to answer at the court.

And see that hog with drooping ears
and tail;

At games and public places he'd ne'er fail
To occupy two seats, while ladies stood;
I've turned him to a pig for others' good.
That scrawny hog, that's biting at his back,
Who, as a man did never false tales lack,
Did scandalize his friends and neighbors; so,
I changed him to a pig some months ago.

That flabby one, that wallows in the mire,

A boodle politician, thief and liar,
And so the herd have all, for some good cause,
Been changed from men to hogs by Nature's laws.

The change was slight, for they were hogs before;

On two legs walked, where now they walk on four;

The diff'rence then, I think you'll surely find,

Is only in degree, and not in kind."



Y dear aunt Circe," then
Medea said,
"Be sure and come to see
us when we're wed.
And now we must be
going, Jason dear."

"I'll come to see you, children, never fear,"
Responded Circe, "and I'll come right soon;
I hope you'll have a happy honey-moon."

Then Jason and Medea made their way
Across the isle to where the Argo lay.
They sailed at once, by Jason's strict com-
mand.

At dawn they reached the fair Tyrsenian
strand;

And there they beached the Argo for a day,
In troublous doubt as to their future way.

Now Peleus was strolling on the beach,
Communing with himself in silent speech;
When Thetis, lovely sea-nymph, came
ashore—

His wife, who'd left him many years be-
fore—

He clasped her to his breast with tears of
joy,

And cried: "O, Thetis, how's our darling
boy!"

"Achilles is all right," his wife replied,
"He's with old Chiron on the mountain
side.

Another matter's brought me here to you:

LITTLE FISHES

I'm sent by Juno, to befriend your crew.
Great dangers still await you on your course;

Pay strict attention then to my discourse.
The Wandering Rocks, and Sirens, menace you,

And fearful Scylla and Charybdis, too.

Now Iris, by command of Juno, fair,
To old Æolus, will at once repair,
And bid him quiet all the winds that blow,
Except a steady west wind, even so.
And, then old Vulcan she will next entreat
To close his forge, and thus dispel the heat,
Disperse the clouds of smoke from off the sea,

So that the Argo, sailing fast and free,
May with less danger thus pursue her way,
If Vulcan and Æolus both obey.

Now when the Sirens' island you draw near,
Bid Orpheus play and sing both loud and clear,
To drown the voices of the Sirens fair.
So sweet, enchanting, are their voices, rare,
Seductive, too, no man would count the cost,
But, landing there, forever would be lost.
My nymphs will guide you through the Wand'ring Rocks,
And guard you from their awful clashing shocks.



HEN Scylla and Charybdis
yet remain,
Such terrors you will never
meet again;
For Scylla hath six mouths
well-armed with teeth,
And woe to him that passeth underneath.
And on a cliff she dwells, within a
cave,
Round which the angry waters rush and
rave.
And opposite, a rock between the tides,
Is where the dread Charybdis ever hides.
Her mouth's a fearful whirlpool, wide and
deep,
Through which the circling waters surge
and leap;
But, I will hold the Argo's rudder
straight,
And guide her safely through the narrow
gate.
And thus your greatest dangers will be
passed,
And you will reach the shores of Greece,
at last.
It happens that the luckiest thing in life,
For you, is that a water-nymph's your
wife.
And now, good-bye—but one thing do not
do,
Don't point me out to any of the crew.

LITTLE FISHES



EMEMBER me to Chiron, when
you meet;
He must be careful of Achilles'
feet;

He's proof against all ills, except one heel,
And much solicitude for that I feel.
Instead of sandals, make for him strong
shoes,
Which, for his mother's sake he'll not re-
fuse.

Now Peleus, again I'll say good-bye;
The fact is, I am feeling kind o' dry;
My fins are curling up, as you can see,'
And then headlong she plunged into the sea.

Now, Peleus related all he'd heard
To Jason and the crew, and they averred
'T were best to try to carry out the plan
Devised by Juno; and at once began
To tauten stays and braces for the trip;
Put everything in order on the ship.

Next day the west wind blowing fresh
and free,
The Argo once again put out to sea.
Her pennon floated proudly from the mast;
The sea was smooth, the Argo sailing fast;
And sailing fast and free by day and night,
At length a little island hove in sight,
And then a cliff, and beach of yellow
sand,
Then cool and shady groves upon the
land.



HE breath of orange blossoms filled the air;
Delicious fragrance floated everywhere;
Enchanting music sweetly rose and fell,

Responsive to the rhythmic ocean swell;
And softly stealing o'er the fragrant sea,
In cadence soft, the strangest melody
Came tripping, rippling, o'er the ocean tide—

The Sirens' song—the sailor's willing bride.

Their lovely forms displayed beneath the trees;

Their love songs borne upon the summer breeze:

"O, sailors bold, come rest ye here awhile;
In love's sweet dalliance your hours beguile;

Our arms are soft and white; our kisses sweet;

O, sailors, come and rest in love's retreat."
Then toward the land Ancæus steered the ship.

Medea then to Jason's side did slip:

"O, Jason, take the helm at any cost;
Steer out to sea, or we are surely lost."

And Atalanta cried to Orpheus:

"Strike up your lyre and loudly sing to us;

LITTLE FISHES

And sing of Greece, and wives and sweet-hearts, there;
And let your voice and lyre fill all the air;
 Crowd out and drown those songs of vile deceit;
For death, not love, lurks in their dread retreat."

Then Jason boldly took the helm and steered,
And toward the open sea the Argo veered.
The song of Orpheus, so loud and clear,
Did banish other sounds from mind and ear.
The crew was saved, at least all saved but one,

For ere the song of Orpheus was begun,
Poor Butes, overcome by Siren's lay,
Leaped overboard, and quickly swam away.
But Venus, ere he reached the island shore,
Descended on a cloud, and Butes bore
To far off Lilybeum, there to dwell,
A booty for this beauty, I've heard tell.

Anon, the Argo, sailing toward the east,
Another danger met, and not the least.
The Wand'ring Rocks, of which they'd heard with dread,
The heroes saw next day, and just ahead.
Fierce flames were belching from a cave on shore,
Though Vulcan's forge was out, and smoked no more;



ND, resting on the hammer
in his hand,
The god of fire upon a
rock did stand.
He did no work that day,
it did not suit

To have the air so black with smoke and
soot.

He gazed in wonder as the Argo sailed,
And then the crew old Vulcan loudly
hailed:

“A bully boat; a bully crew, as well!”
The heroes gave the Chiron college yell.

Then sailing on they had enough to do,
With oars and sail, to guide the Argo
through

The Wand’ring Rocks, that loomed on
every side,

And rolled and tumbled in the angry tide.
But now a wondrous sight the crew beheld,
Which all their dread and fear at once dis-
pelled:

For, swimming swiftly at the Argo’s side,
And perched on every rolling rock, beside,
Were countless sea-nymphs, fairest of the
fair;

With liquid eyes, and wondrous golden
hair.

Their sickle fins glanced brightly in the
sun,

Gay fin-de-siecle girls, who thought it fun

LITTLE FISHES

To fend the Argo with their arms so white,
And ward her from the rocks; a glorious sight.

And Thetis, swimming swiftly at the stern,
The rudder in her hands did twist and turn,
And safely steered the Argo on her course;
The west wind blowing now with increased force;
And Juno, resting on a cloud, above,
Looked down upon the scene with eyes of love.

Now, safely through the Wand'ring Rocks, at last,
The Argo, aided by the sea-nymphs, passed.
Then from the rocks, where they'd been perched in glee,
The Nereids plunged headlong in the sea.
Then Galatea marshaled them each side
The Argo, where their arms and fins they plied,
And kept her in the channel, straight and true;
While Thetis at the rudder steered her through
The deep and narrow strait, whose treach-'rous tide,
Did Scylla from Charybdis e'er divide.



HIS danger passed, again
the open sea
Spread out before the
Argo, sailing free.
Loud cheers from Jason
and the crew rang
out;

The water-nymphs, like
dolphins, swam about.
The heroes manned the gunwales; kisses
threw
To Thetis and her nymphs, as fair as
true;
The Nereids then flapped their fins with
glee,
Then disappeared beneath the deep blue
sea.

Now, sailing past Trinacrian isle, next
day,
The sound of bleating sheep came o'er the
bay;
Anon, the low of kine came from the shore;
Then toward the land they bent the lab'-
ring oar.
But Lynceus, far-sighted, bid them hold:
"I see," said he, "two maids with crooks
of gold,
Who herd the sheep and cattle, white as
snow,
With horns of gold, as through green fields
they go."

LITTLE FISHES

Medea then seemed quite alarmed, and said:
“O, heroes do not land; sail on instead.
From what I’ve heard my father oftentimes
say,

These are Phæthusa and Lampetie,
The daughters of the sun, who tend their
herds
On this fair isle.” They wondered at her
words,

But turned the ship again and sailed away,
And Corcyra they reached the following day.

’T was here the kind Phæacians dwelt
in peace;
Good friends to all who hailed from sunny
Greece.

The king, Alcinous, a welcome true
Gave Jason and the heroes, whom he knew
By good report to be most famous men;
And they were glad to rest ashore again.

The queen, Arete, also entertained
Medea and At’lanta; and was pained
To hear the story of Medea’s flight;
But told her what she’d done was just and
right.

In games of skill the heroes spent the
days;
The king and court were loud in words of
praise.
The people from the country flocked to
town
To see these Grecian heroes of renown.

And priceless gifts and treasures were bestowed;
And freely, milk and wine and honey, flowed.



UT lo, one day appeared the Colchian fleet!
The leader came ashore the king to greet.
The rocks Cyanean they'd safely passed,
And through the mouth of Pontus came at last.

“The orders of Ætes are,” he said,
“To find his daughter, who has basely fled;
To take her back to Colchis, there to meet
The penalty of death, for her deceit.
So, if Medea and the Golden Fleece
Are given up, a treaty then, of peace,
Will be prepared, which he will then submit;

A peace commission formed to sit on it.
The treaty will provide—a usual thing—
Indemnity from Jason to the king.

One item is to pay the cost of hire
Of two brass bulls, with use of fire;
Also, the hire of plow and double yoke;
And rent of ground, he with the oxen broke;
Also the seed with which the ground was sown,

LITTLE FISHES

Both rare and priceless, even he will own.
And then the crop, though reaped with toil
and care,
Was left to spoil and rot—at least the share
Of king Æetes, which he values high.
Then there's the damage to his dragon's
eye;
A broken limb, whereon the Fleece once
hung,
The choicest tree in all the grove, and
young.
The wharfage for the Argo must be paid,
And recompense for water rights be made.
Then there's the sunken ship, though once
condemned,
Her price went up as she went down, con-
temned.
Then last of all, there comes the wear and
tear
Of king Æetes' bed and royal chair,
Whereon he rolled and squirmed, and
pitched and tossed,
Since that dark night the Golden Fleece
was lost.
Now this the bill of costs the king hath
made,
And this the bill of costs that must be paid.
The treaty will not name the just amount
That Jason to the king must e'en account.
To his commissioners the king will trust
To do his will—in other words, they must.



UCH latitude, however, he 'll
allow—
Not less than half the lati-
tude, I trow,
Of Jason's kingdom, when
he takes the throne,

'T will take to pay the debt, I freely own.
This is the ultimatum of the king;
At least the substance—I was told to bring.

And if the terms are not to Jason's mind,
And to refuse he seems at all inclined,
Then I am well prepared, and will enforce
The just demands of Æetes, of course.
My battle ships are anchored in the bay;
The Argo's bottled up—can't get away."

Then king Alcinous looked vexed and
frowned,
"You know," said he, "that this is neutral
ground;

One day in port you are compelled to stay,
Should Jason wish to leave and sail away.
He is my guest and ally, for the nonce;
Your ultimatum I'll report, at once;
And ultimately I will arbitrate
Between you both, and my decision state,
Which will be final, and you must comply;
Not yours to kick, nor ask the reason why.
Now order what you please to eat or drink;
I must have time to cogitate and think.

And now my army I must mobilize,
A numerous mob, at present, I surmise.

LITTLE FISHES

I have more soldiers than I really need,
I wish that half were killed or dead, indeed.
Large standing armies are a great expense,
And I have several millions for defense."

Alcinous then took a formal leave,
A large smile lurking in his royal sleeve.
The captain of the fleet was sore dismayed;
In other words he felt somewhat afraid.

Now Jason, when he heard the terms
proposed,
Waxed very wroth, and even seemed dis-
posed

To fight the fleet with his one ship, alone;
To this the heroes, one and all, were prone.
Alcinous, however, urged delay;
Said he would arbitrate the following day;
Reluctantly the heroes did consent.

Medea to the queen, Arete, went;
With tearful eyes did importune her aid.
"Have pity, queen, O pity me, poor maid;
O do not let them send me back," she
cried;

"O do not take me from my Jason's side.
He's all I have; and I'm to be his wife.
If taken back, I'll surely loose my life."

The queen, much moved, said she would
intercede

With king Alcinous, and try, indeed,
To form some plan whereby to circumvent
Her Colchian foes, who for her death were
bent.



HE queen then hastened to
her lord, the king,
And said: "My dear, don't
let them do this thing;
Don't let them take this poor
maid back to die.

We rather should commend her, you and I,
For what she's done for noble Jason's
sake;

Now, hubby, this poor maid, don't let them
take.

Suppose that I should thus be forced from
you—

Now what would then be right for you to
do."

The king then thought it over in his
mind:

"My dear," said he, "her case is not that
kind.

If she were Jason's wife, 'tis very clear,
I should insist on her remaining here.

For king Æetes then would have no claim,
Though she would be his daughter all the
same.

But she would owe allegiance to her lord;
To him who furnished clothes and bed and
board."

"O, thank you," said the queen, "you've
made it clear;

Now, kiss me, sweet; you're such a duck,
my dear!"

LITTLE FISHES



Now queen Aretes' plan was quickly formed;
Medea, also Jason, she informed:
"Your wedding must take place without delay;
The king, himself, will give the bride away—
He's good at giving things away," she said,
"T was he that put this nice plan in my head.
Medea, you will wear my wedding dress,
No time to make a trousseau, now, I guess.
At'lanta will be bridesmaid, none so fair;
And I, myself, will dress your golden hair.
Now, I must go and see about the cake;
And all the other preparations make.
The wedding will take place this afternoon,
And after that begins the honey-moon.
Let Orpheus compose the wedding hymn;
Have everything in order, nice and trim.
Now, in the holy cave down by the sea,
Where Macris once did dwell with honey-bee,
The maidens of the queen did there prepare
The bridal chamber for the happy pair.
The walls made gay with silken curtains hung,
Festoons of orange blossoms o'er them strung;



With bridal wreaths that rarest flowers
flecked,
The honey-scented grotto was bedecked.
The bridal couch of sandal wood was
made,
And on it softest skins and pelts were laid,
With robes of precious silks, and white
swan's down,
And fine, fair linen then the whole did
crown.
The Golden Fleece was then laid over all,
And through the holy, sacred, rocky hall
It shed a radiance sweet, divinely fair,
Its steady, golden sheen beyond compare.
And strains of music, soft and low and
sweet,
And fragrant incense filled the rare retreat.
The heroes built an altar by the sea;
The Argo gently rose and fell, a-lee.
They slaughtered lambs, and mixed the
barley meal,
And to the blessed gods they made appeal
For health and joy, and happiness through
life,
For Jason and his lovely Colchian wife.
The altar fire, high leaping through the air,
Threw out upon the sea its ruddy glare;
Shone on the sea-nymphs, floating on the
waves,
And bringing gifts of amber from their
caves,

LITTLE FISHES

And gems and corals rare, they also bore,
And jewels bright, from every sea-girt shore.
The woodland nymphs brought blossoms,
 pure and white;
Their golden hair, and bosoms, were be-dight
With gorgeous flowers of every hue and shade,
By Juno sent, from mountain, glen and glade.

Now, as the deepening twilight closed around,
The wheels of chariots rumbled o'er the ground;
And in procession moved the happy throng,
To share the marriage feast, in wine and song.

The royal chariot, with the king and queen,
Both dressed in royal robes of brightest sheen;

Then Jason and Medea, happy pair,
Arrayed in wedding garments rich and rare;

At'lanta, bridesmaid, radiant as a star,
And Meleager, groomsman, in their car.
Then followed maids of honor, sweetly dressed;

The courtiers of the king, clothed in their best;

With priests and satellites, and warriors grim—

Then Orpheus struck up the wedding hymn.



ND there, beside the ever restless sea,
On which he'd sailed with baffling winds, and free;
Through nights of gloom, and sunny days of ease;
With furious gales, and gentle summer breeze;
Beside the sea, the Argo in full sight—
Behold brave Jason on his wedding night!
And standing proudly by his manly side—
Behold Medea, Jason's Colchian bride!
The fairest maid in all the world, was she;
The bravest man in all the world, was he.
For then, as now, both here and every-
where,
'T is true—none but the brave deserve the
fair.
And then, the altar fire gleaming bright,
The priests performed the sacred marriage
rite.
The king, quite proudly, gave the bride
away;
The bride and groom both promised to
obey,
And honor, love and cherish; or at least,
'T was understood so, by the king and
priest.

LITTLE FISHES

Then Orpheus and all the Argo's crew,
And all the wedding guests, and people, too,
And all the nymphs, from woodland and
the sea,

The marriage hymn sang loud and joyfully.
Of all the folk assembled at this scene,
No one was truly happier than the queen.
The wedding breakfast, she would give
next day—

So king and queen and people went away.
The heroes all kept guard throughout the
night,

With song and cup and speech, till broad
daylight.

Next day the wedding breakfast was
prepared,
And all the guests, both great and small,
repaired

To greet the bride and groom, in banquet
hall,

Where they were warmly welcomed, one
and all,

By king Alcinous and his loved queen;
And bright and gay and joyous was the
scene.

Around the tables, spread with sumptuous
fare,

Were seated all the guests; and with them
there,

The Captain of the Colchian fleet, as well,
Who was, in truth, a jolly naval swell.

By special invitation he was there,
To see the king concerning his affair.



Now Jason and Medea sat serene,
One by the king, the other by the queen.
Medea looked so pretty, and so sweet,
She charmed the jolly Captain of the fleet.
“The daughter of the king, she is, no doubt,”
He thought, and swelled his manly bosom out.
He did not know that she was lately wed.
The silly Captain thought the royal spread
Was in his honor, and would soon be told,
To take Medea and the Fleece of Gold.
“I will not sail for Colchis, though,” he said,
“Until this lovely damsels I have wed.”
The king then rose before his royal chair,
And said to all the guests assembled there:
“The time has now arrived when I should state,
That I a matter was to arbitrate,
Between Æetes, king of Colchis land,
And Jason, sitting here, at my right hand.
Now Jason, with the necessary pull,
Became entitled to a fleece of wool;

LITTLE FISHES

Possession of the fleece was then withheld,
Till Jason, by a ruse, was then compelled
To take the fleece which rightly was his
own;

And then he sailed away—but not alone.

Æetes had a daughter—and has yet—
Who fell in love with Jason first they
met.

She aided Jason to obtain his pelt,
And then such fear of king Æetes felt,
That she resolved from home to run away,
And sailed with Jason, as his *fiancee*.

It happens that a week or so ago,
Came Jason and his ship, as you all know.
And then again it happens, strange to
say,

The Colchian fleet sailed in on yesterday.
The Captain of the fleet, in duty bound—
Medea and the fleece both being found—
Demands them, with indemnity, in full;
A great cry makes about a little wool.
And this the case I was to arbitrate;
And this the crooked thing to render
straight.

Now, yesterday, the case I did review;
Called for my law books; searched them
through and through;
Compared the legal aspects of the case,
With wise decisions made in every place;
With precedents established by each court,
In all such cases of retrieve and tort.



OW, my decision, yesterday,
was this;
Or would have been, but
things have gone amiss—
That Jason should retain the
fleece of wool;

In him the title's vested, clear and full.
And finding nothing legal to prevent,
Medea to her father should be sent.

Indemnity from Jason to the king,
I hold to be a most improper thing.

The damages alleged, were all incurred
By Jason in his contract—so averred.
A contract made by Æetes the king—
So Jason does not owe him anything.

Now this decision, made but yesterday,
Is hardly worth a sou-markee to-day.
There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip,
't is true;

And circumstances alter cases, too.
Now, yesterday, 't was plain, and in accord
With all the law: Medea was my ward.

I, as her legal guardian, did prepare
Her extradition papers, with much care;
Whereas, to-day, I have no legal right,
In equity, a wife to extradite.

In common law, or chancery, as well,
A wife must with her husband ever dwell.
This knotty problem has at last been solved,
And from an irksome duty I'm absolved;
For Jason cut the Gordian knot last night

LITTLE FISHES

By wedding fair Medea, fast and tight.
To quiet any doubt, I need but say,
'T was I, myself, who gave the bride away.
Medea now is in another state—
The state of wedlock—with her happy
mate;
My jurisdiction's lapsed; 't is just as well;
And in that happy state may they long
dwell.
Now, just another word, to make things
clear:
The Captain of the Colchian fleet is here.
A man of honor, and a sailor bold,
He will not take amiss what he's been told;
A miss she is no longer; sure's he's born;
He came for wool and goes back badly
shorn.
Now pledge we all a brimming cup of wine
To Jason and his happy bride, divine.
Now let all care and animosity
Be drowned in wine, without verbosity."
The Captain of the fleet then took the
floor,
And in his hand a cup of wine he bore:
"O king, I wish to drink the fair bride's
health;
I wish her joy, and happiness, and wealth.
The lady I have never seen before,
And seeing her is simply to adore.
Her modesty and beauty, rare to see,
Would surely banish evil far from me.





ITH her I ne'er would sail to
Colchis land,
Where shame and death
await her from the hand
Of king Æetes, lost to every
sense

Of manhood, truth and justice; so from
hence

I will not sail to-day, nor yet next year;
For King Æetes' wrath I greatly fear.
And now King Alcinous, I will swear
Allegiance to your crown, if you'll prepare
A deed of gift to some fair tract of land,
Which I will colonize with my command."
And so it came to pass, they settled there,
And lived forever after, free from care.

The good ship Argo, Jason and his
bride,

The heroes all, once more upon the tide
Sailed gaily forth; for now it seemed to be
A short and pleasant sail to Thessaly.
Before they sailed, Alcinous, the King,
Rich stranger's gifts to all the crew did
bring,
With twelve Phœacian slave girls, dressed
in green,
Attendants for Medea, from the queen.

And now, the huge sail hoisted flat and
trim,
The Argo, like a sea-bird, swift did skim
O'er waters blue, that rippled in the sun;

LITTLE FISHES

The heroes glad their voyage seemed most done.

By Epirus they coasted, sailing free.
Ambracia, Arcarnania, passed a-lee.
A few days later Lynceus did spy.
The land of Pelops, dimly, 'neath the sky.
Then all the heroes shouted, cheer on cheer,

To think their longed-for native land was near.

But soon a calm fell on the waters bright;
The sun, a crimson ball, sunk out of sight.
The sail was furled and lashed upon the yard;
The heroes at the oars were pulling hard;
The night grew thick and murky all around;
The plashing of the oars the only sound.
Then suddenly, at midnight, there arose
A gale tempestuous from the northern snows.

The Argo flew before the chilly blast,
The black waves rolling high and thick and fast.

Nine days and nights they drove before the gale,

Nine days and nights, without an oar or sail.

Behind them shrieked the tempest-ridden breeze;

Behind them piled the high tumultuous seas.



T last, ahead, they heard the breakers roar,
And on a tidal wave were cast ashore.

On Syrtis' sandy shoals, both high and dry,
The Argo, partly buried, now doth lie.

The tidal wave, receding from the shore,
The distant sea is heard and seen no more.
And stretching all around, on either hand,
Is nothing to be seen but shining sand,
And foam and wrack left by the ruthless tide;

No tree or shrub or rock can be descried.
The heroes then bemoaned their cruel fate;
Their pitiful and helpless, abject state.
And as the dreary, starless night closed 'round,

They threw themselves upon the storm-swept ground.
Each wrapped his cloak about his wretched head,
And waited for the dawn, with fear and dread.

Medea and her maidens, in their grief,
Wept bitter, salty tears; 't was their belief
That one and all of thirst must surely die
Upon this barren waste; this desert dry.

LITTLE FISHES

Next morning, Jason wandered off,
alone,
Across the Libyan desert, tempest strown;
To think and meditate, perchance aright,
Some plan devise to help him in this plight.
At length he covered up his weary head,
And laid him down, the scorching sand his bed.

Anon, the Libyan goddesses, so fair,
Who sauntering by, heard moans of grim despair;
And seeing Jason groveling in the sand,
Impelled by pity, took him by the hand.
Then from his yellow curls removed the cloak,

And thus the goddesses to Jason spoke:
“O, son of Æson, do not be cast down;

Thou wilt not die; thou yet shalt wear thy crown.

We’ve heard about thy quest for Fleece of Gold;

About thy toils and troubles we’ve been told.

We’re Libya’s daughters, warders of her land;

’T is here we herd our sheep upon the strand.

Now rouse ye Jason, and all fear dispel;
Be brave and true, and all will yet be well.





HEN Amphitrite loosens
Neptune's car,
Thy homeward way will
then be shown afar.
Then follow with the
Argo, as seems best,
And bear her, as she bore
you, on this quest."

Thus spoke the goddesses, so fair and
bright,
And quickly vanished in the bright sun-
light.

Then to his comrades Jason swiftly
fled,
And told them all the goddesses had
said.

They marveled much, and none knew
what was meant;
But all believed the words that had been
sent.

When, lo! ere long, a wondrous sight be-
hold!

A monstrous horse with flowing mane of
gold,
Came striding toward them from the dis-
tant sea;
And passing swiftly, as on wings, did
flee,

Far inland 'cross the desert, and at last,
Was lost to view. The crew all stood
aghast.

LITTLE FISHES

"Methinks," said Peleus, "that Neptune's car
By Amphitrite has been loosed afar.
That was his off wheel-horse; I know him
well;
I've often seen him in the ocean swell,
When I was courting Thetis by the sea;
He's got a water-blister on one knee."
Then Lynceus, of the telescopic eye,
Said: "Comrades bold, the horse I still
descry.
He's plunging in the waves of some vast
lake,
That lies beyond the course we saw him
take."
"An inland sea, I've heard somewhere,
or read,
Lies on the Libyan coast," then Jason said.
"It follows then, a matter 'tis, of course,
That we should follow after this white
horse;
For something red before, perhaps behind,
Is always near a white horse, you will
find."
Thus Pollux spoke to Atalanta fair,
Who then was doing up her bright red
hair.
"The question now," quoth Jason, "is
to take
The Argo 'cross the desert to this lake.
Just how to do it, we must now decide!"



HERE'S but one way," then
Argus quick replied:
"We'll raise her on our shoul-
ders, while we slide
Her keel upon the sand; and
thus abide

By good advice received by you, to-day,
From guardian goddesses of Libya."

"We'll undergo a great hardship, I
know,"
Said Pollux, "and our progress will be
slow."

Said Castor: "I for one do now agree
To shoulder this responsibility."

Ancæus said: "If Hercules were
here,
He'd push her through the sand, while I
would steer."

"Yes, you're a bunco steerer, I'll admit,"
Said Idas, "but old Hercules is nit.
He'd tell you put your shoulder to the
boat;

The problem's not to steer, but how to
tote."

"That's right," said Canthus, "and I'll
just observe:

We've got the sand, and ergo, lots of
nerve.

Don't waste your time in talking; don't
demur;

The Argo's carried us—we'll carry her;

LITTLE FISHES

On even keel across this sandy waste,
We'll carry her with less of speed, than
haste.

The track of Neptune's horse is deep and
straight,

The only chart we need—an open gate.
His mane flew out behind, a golden vane
To point the way—remember, then, the
mane!"

Next day, the heroes fearing now for
naught,
The mast and yard secured, both snug and
taut,

Along the Argo's bilge, on either side;
And then their shoulders to the spars ap-
plied,

And hoisted up the vessel from her bed,
And so began their journey, with firm tread.
A task quite easy for this strong command
On firm, hard ground—but hard upon the
sand.

And Orpheus struck loud his golden lyre;
Sole-stirring music did the crew inspire.
Medea and her maids sang hymns of praise;
And so they passed twelve long and weary
days;

Until, at last, they reached a small salt sea,
The lake Tritonis, which they hailed with
glee.

And soon upon the rippling waves did
launch



HEIR heavy burden, Argo,
trim and staunch.

Then, water for their ves-
sel having found;
For water for themselves
they searched around.

They'd emptied all the water jugs before,
To lighten up the load their shoulders bore.
For twelve long days they drank but wine
and mead;

So water pure was now an urgent need.
In searching for a spring 'mid rocks and
trees,

They found the Garden of Hesperides.
And there, beneath an apple tree, lay dead,
The monster serpent, Ladon, with cleft
head.

And there, lamenting, were the maidens
three,

Erytheis, and Ægle, Hespere;
Who, when they saw the heroes drawing
near,

To dust and ashes turned, at once, in
fear.

Then Orpheus, who knew the marvel
well,
Besought them by some sign or word to
tell,

Where he might find some spring to quench
his thirst—

And all the trials of the crew rehearsed.

LITTLE FISHES

Then from their dust and ashes rose three trees,

From which looked out the fair Hesperides.
The poplar one, Hespere, in alarm,
Said: "Heroes, are you sure you mean no harm?"

Erytheis, the elm, peeped from her trunk,
And meekly said: "We hope you are not drunk."

The willow, Ægle, said: "Don't be too free;

"T is treason rank, to meddle with us three."

"O, queens divine," then Orpheus sweetly said,
"We would not harm a hair on either head.

We will not trespass here within your park,
Nor even carve our names upon your bark.
We are not tourists, but sea-faring men;
We seek but water, and when found, will then

Depart at once, and bless you for your aid."

Then Ægle brushed aside her leaves,
and said:

"O, heroes, but a day or two ago
Came Hercules, the monster, whom ye know.

He slew the guardian serpent, 'neath the tree;

And stole the golden apples; then did flee.





OWN by the lake he smote
yon great gray rock,
And whether from the gods,
or from the shock,
A stream of water burst
from out the cleft;
And when he'd quenched his thirst, the
monster left.

He left us to our grief, to weep alone;
And thus ye see, we've troubles of our
own.

We're full of sap, which from our leaves
drops down,
And thus, in tears, our grief we fain would
drown."

"I see, fair maids," then Orpheus re-
plied,
"You've cause for grief, and bitterness be-
side.
Your orchard's robbed, your snake lies
dead, indeed;
But you're the apples of our eyes, in need.
We thank you much, O gracious queens,
for this,
And humbly wish that we your bark might
kiss."

Quoth Ægle then: "The kiss is under-
stood;
What will you with a kiss of willow wood.
O, would that ye might see us in the flesh,
With golden hair, and rosy lips, so fresh.

LITTLE FISHES

I know full well what Hobson's choice
would be—
Instead of kissing bark, why—he'd kiss
me."

Said Pollux: "What's the use of all this
fuss?

You're barking up the wrong tree, Orpheus.
For information given, girls, much thanks.
We'll now proceed to fill our water tanks."

When all the jars were filled and put
aboard,

And peace and quietness once more restored,
Then Lynceus, Euphemus, Canthus, too,
Also the sons of Boreas, who flew—
Searched far and wide, for tracks of Her-
cules;

Far better had they stayed aboard, in
ease.

For Canthus, wandering by some sheep,
alone,
The shepherd slew him with a heavy
stone.

The heroes killed the shepherd, stole the
herd,

And Canthus' body in the sand interred.
And then poor Mopsus, bitten by a snake,
Soon died; and then another grave they
make.

The heroes were cast down with grim de-
spair;

Medea and her maidens tore their hair.



HREE times around
the graves, in harness clad,
The heroes marched, to
music slow and sad.
With heavy hearts
they went aboard
the ship;

And then the cables from the rocks they
slip;

And rowing fast, they left the fatal shore,
And wished that they might see it never
more.

And round and round the lake they rowed
and sailed,

To find an outlet to the sea, but failed.
Then making for the land, they went
ashore;

Set up Apollo's tripod, as before.

Then Triton, in the semblance of a
youth,
Appeared before them; in his hand, for-
sooth,

A stranger's gift—naught but a clod of
earth.

"I give thee what I have—'t is little
worth."

He said, "But if you wish to reach, this
day,
The open sea, then I can point the
way."

LITTLE FISHES

Euphemus gladly took the earthen clod,
And told their story to the wondering god;
Who, pointing far across the rippling lake,
Said: "I will show you, now, the course to
take."

Just by the clump of trees upon yon hill,
Just where the water looks so black and
still,
And where the breakers, white, show on
each side—

There, is the narrow outlet for the tide.
The channel lies along the starboard shore,
For half a league, perhaps a little more;
Until between two rocks you'll see a tree;
Then leave the coast, and you'll be all at
sea."

The heroes, rowing swiftly o'er the
lake,
They saw the youth Apollo's tripod take,
And plunging in was quickly lost to view
Beneath the waves; while they their course
pursue.

But soon old Triton in his proper shape,
With fins and scales from forked tail to
nape,
Appeared beside the ship with jealous care,
And shook the water from his parsely hair,
Which sparsely covered this old sea-god's
head,

But not so green, as I have somewhere
read.



LD Triton took the rudder in his hand,
And deftly steered the ship toward the strand;
Then safely through the narrow inlet passed,
And out upon the open sea, at last.

Then with a blast upon his huge sea-shell,
On balanced scales and fins, he wished them well.

Then to the west wind hoisted they the sail;
For several days the west wind did not fail.

The breeze then backed to south'ard, to their joy,
And steady blew, and fresh, their hopes to buoy.

At length, the isle Carpathus, dimly seen,
Loomed up, far off, against the sky serene.
Next day a gladsome sight appeared to greet

The hardy heroes, for the isle of Crete
Was close aboard; and all prepared to land,
And pass the night upon the welcome strand.

Now, giant Talos, warder of the isle,
A man of brass, and with a temper vile;

LITTLE FISHES



A relic of the bronze age, truly; he,
Did watch unceasingly across the sea.
No ship did he allow to come near land,
But drove them off, with rocks, from his
strong hand.

This demi-god was brass from head to
heel;

His muscles and his sinews strong as steel;
The hardest thing about him was his cheek;
But one small place about him was quite
weak:

Beside one ankle was a swollen vein,
Just covered by a skin so thin, 't was
plain,

To wound him in this spot, so varicose,
Would fatal prove; at least, so I suppose.

Now, in the harbor, Argo proudly
sailed,

When from a cliff old Talos loudly hailed:
"Keep off! keep off!" he cried in thunder
tones,

And emphasized his vile remarks with
stones.

He broke great chunks of rock from off
the crag;

And huge stones from their earthy beds did
drag;

And hurled them toward the ship with aim
so true,

That quickly out of range, the crew with-
drew.



ND Pollux then to Jason
sadly said:

"We can not land until
this monster's dead.
Too bad it is that men of
flesh and blood

Are kept at bay, and drifting on its flood,
By this one man of brass—a brazen heap,
Who rocks us in the cradle of the deep.
That men of mettle, by this metal cad,
Are thus withstood—I say, it is too bad."

"'T is true," Medea then to Jason
said,
"We can not land till this brass giant's
dead.

Now, I've a potent charm that can not
fail
To bring disaster, even death entail,
To all things made of brass, for you well
know
The brazen bulls, by you were conquered
so.

Now I will go below and work the charm;
Do you the vessel keep just out of harm;
And sailing off and on, and full and by,
With gibes and taunts the brazen man
defy;

To make him angry you must do your
best,
For whom the gods destroy—you know
the rest."

LITTLE FISHES

HE heroes followed this advice,
so sage;
Old Talos was beside himself
with rage;
And in his anger, rushing for a stone,
He gashed the vein beside his ankle-bone;
But in his frenzy, gave it little heed;
In torrents did the severed vessel bleed.
At last, the brazen giant grew so weak,
He could not cast a stone—he could not
speak;
But swayed and reeled and tottered on the
crag;
And quivering, trembling, like a wounded
stag,
His limbs gave way, and down his body
dashed;
Far down upon the rocks below he crashed.
With Talos dead, now everything was
right,
And so the heroes slept ashore that night.
Next morn, at dawn, by faint light of
the stars,
The heroes filled again the water jars.
And to the mild south wind they set the
sail,
E'en as the morning star began to pale.
As o'er the gulf of Crete they sailed
along,
Their lightsome hearts found vent in merry
song.



OR now their souls were
filled with joy and peace;
For soon, O soon, they'd
sight the shores of Greece.
At night the full, round
moon rose o'er the sea;
The dolphins sported in her light with glee;
The merry waves caressed the Argo's
prow,
And broke in silver spray about the bow.
Medea laid her head on Jason's breast;
And he her moonlit, golden hair, caressed.
"Medea, love," he said, "we'll soon be
home,
No more on earth or sea to sail or roam.
In happiness we'll spend our future days,
With none to censure; all to love and
praise.
The Golden Fleece is won, and by your
aid;
My queen will be most welcome, too," he
said.
"Together we will rule my people, dear,
And live, henceforth, devoid of strife or
fear."
The best laid plans of mice and men,
they say,
Don't always suit the gang, in every way.
For soon the moon was hidden by a cloud;
The stars were folded in night's sable
shroud;

LITTLE FISHES

And inky blackness clothed the sky and sea;
And soon there was no windward, and no lee.
The breeze died out, nor left the slightest breath;
And everything was still and black as death.
And even Lynceus now failed to spy
His hand, when held before his X-ray eye.
And silently the Argo drifted now;
But whether port or starboard, stern or bow,
Not even Lynceus could tell 'the crew.
They held their breath—'t was all that they could do.
Then Jason raised aloft his hands and prayed;
And called on Phœbus, for his timely aid.
He supplicated Juno, heaven's queen,
To shed a ray of light upon the scene.
And long and earnestly did he implore;
He prayed as he had never prayed before.
Then suddenly a light illumined the sky;
So bright that each was fain to shade his eye;
And on a rock, revealed by this bright glow—
Apollo stood, and in his hand, his bow!
And from his golden bow the radiant light
Dispelled the murky blackness of the night.





ANCÆUS then discovered they were near
The little isle Hippuris;
and did steer
Straight for its welcome
harbor, in the light.
The crew bent to their
oars with all their

might;

And then when safely anchored in its bay,
Apollo waved his bow, and flew away.

Next morn the grateful heroes built a
shrine,

In honor of the radiant god divine.
They also built an altar on the strand;
And searched the island through, on every
hand,

For sheep or oxen for the sacrifice;
But finding none, pure water must suffice.
Of this, they poured libations on the fire;
The hissing steam arose as high, or higher,
Than from a sacrificial bull or sheep.
The motive, not the means, still means a
heap.

It made Medea's handmaids laugh and
jest;
'T was such a curious sacrifice, at best.
They'd seen great herds of cattle sacrificed,
By king Alcinous, and were surprised
To see the heroes put the fire out,
By pouring water on; it made them shout.

LITTLE FISHES

The heroes laughed in turn; and since
that day,
Some women jest whene'er their husbands
pray.

Aboard once more, they sailed 'neath
cloudless skies,
And proudly now, the Argo's pennon flies.
And sailing smoothly on, at length they
reach

Ægina, where they anchored near the
beach.

And when they went ashore their jars to
fill,

There then arose a strife—the custom
still;

Each hero strove to fill his jar and race
Back to the ship, and try to win first place.
Euphemus, fleet of foot, of course, was
first;

But near the ship he stopped to quench his
thirst;

And Atalanta passed him with her jug,
And won the race and prize—a golden
mug.

And since that day, the Myrmidons of
Thrace,

With jugs of water on their shoulders, race.

The handicap in racing first begun,
In carrying jugs of water on the run.

'T was instituted by an Argonaut;
And still we race, though with a jug or not.



GINA, left astern, the
Argo sailed,
With wind and weather
fair, which never failed.
No more adventures did
the heroes meet;
But sailing ever on, and
ever fleet,

They passed the land of Cecrops; Aulis,
too;

The towns of the Opuntian Locri, view.
And so, at last, upon a sunny day,
They anchored, once again, at Pagasæ!

"I was in the afternoon, they moored
the ship,
Much battered by the long, eventful trip;
But staunch and tight, and classed A
No. 1;
Her figure-head, unmarred, still brightly
shone.

The heroes now prepared to go ashore;
They soon would part, and some would
meet no more.

They packed their kits, and dressed them
in their best,
In honor of the ending of the quest.

Then Jason sent Euphemus, who was
fleet,
To Iolchos, king Pelias to greet.
To tell that he'd returned again to
Greece,

LITTLE FISHES

And with him brought the famous Golden Fleece.

And to remind the king, in view of this,
His resignation would not be amiss.
In fact, it was the proper thing to do,
Since Jason had performed his mission,
true.

But if he did not choose, thus to vacate;
And seemed inclined to halt, or vacillate;
A writ, then, of ejectment, would be served.
All legal forms would strictly be observed.

A *posse comitatus*, sixty strong,
Of sunburnt heroes, quick to right the wrong,

Would then proceed *pugnis et calcibus*,
To execute the writ so just; and *jus Proprietatis* they would then decide,
With *jus possessionis* too, implied;
This would be done *pro bono publico*;
He must be fired; then put out, you know.

And furthermore, the king, he was to tell,
That, heretofore, he ruled not wise, nor well.

That Jason now proposed a government,
To which the governed would give their consent;
If of, and by, and for, the people all,
A government would always stand, not fall.



UPHEMUS was to tell
the people, too,
That Jason, some such
scheme had then in
view.
And with Medea's coun-
sel and advice,
He'd rule in such a way
as would suffice.

Commissioner Euphemus went to town,
And had a secret session with the crown.
His mission he performed with sense and
tact;
For he was born a diplomat, in fact.
The king was sorely vexed, and troubled,
too;
Nonplussed, and fearful; knew not what
to do.

He said that he'd been sick for many
a day;
And did not see how he could go away.
"To tell the truth," he said, "I've got the
grippe.
Tell Jason he must stay aboard his ship.
My doctor has forbidden me to speak
On any subject, for at least, a week.
Some day, when better able to be out;
And when the weather's warmer, I've no
doubt,
My doctor will permit an interview
With Jason and his brave, courageous crew.

LITTLE FISHES

At present, he advises me to wear
My crown both 'night and day; for 't would
 impair
My health, and give me cold, to take it
 off;
And make much worse my hacking, rack-
 ing cough.

I know it is a saying in the town:
‘Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown;’
To take it off, I could not lie at all;
I’d feel light-headed, that’s the truth, and
 fall.

I’m glad you called, but now I’ve talked
 enough,
For I must go and take my doctor’s stuff.”
Euphemus then replied: “O mighty
 king,

I think that Jason will not do a thing
To you, that would increase your cough or
 cold;
In fact, he’d make it warm, with Fleece of
 Gold.

One thing before I go, I’d like to say,
Because we may not meet another day:
Small acorns from large oak trees always
 fall,

And sometimes, with them, little nuts of
 gall;
Not always, though, for gall sometimes we
 find

When least expected, in the human mind.”



UPHEMUS then withdrew and slammed the door;
For Pelias would soon be king, no more.
He hied him then unto the public square;
And soon a crowd of people gathered there;
To whom he told the story of the quest;
Of Jason's promises; and did his best
To favor Jason in the public eye;
And Pelias, he boldly did decry.
He then invited all to come next day,
To welcome Jason, at the harbor bay.
"Hurrah! for Jason; and for Jason's right!"
The people cried and shouted, in their might.
Next morn the populace were all on hand,
And waiting anxiously upon the strand.
In holiday attire they all were dressed;
Each man and woman strove to look his best.
The story of the Fleece, they all had heard—
Euphemus told them all that had occurred—
And now they came to welcome back the crew,
Who'd sailed so many months the ocean blue.

LITTLE FISHES

Whose mighty deeds of valor were re-told;
Who'd brought again to Greece the Fleece
of Gold.

And gilded cars and chariots and wains,
Came lumbering down the roads, and
through the lanes,
To carry up the Argonauts to town;
Those weather-beaten heroes of renown;
Who at the word, assembled at the
wales;

I must admit that all description fails,
To give a good idea, true and right,
Of that imposing, gay and glorious sight.

The Argo showed her port side to the
shore;
Thrust through each port-hole was a blade
of oar;
An Argonaut, erect, stood on each blade;
The rest were on the gilded wale arrayed.
Thus, in three ranks, the heroes were dis-
posed;
Each rank above the other stood disclosed;
Their burnished shields and helmets gleam-
ing bright,
Reflected from the sun long rays of light.
And Jason and Medea, happy pair;
The twelve Phœacian maids, with golden
hair,
In silken raiment, stood upon the stern;
A group toward which admiring glances
turn.



And this the sight the people liked the best.

Then from ten thousand throats upon the shore,
There came a sound, much like the ocean's roar.

The people waved their scarfs, and shouted loud;

And ne'er before was such a happy crowd.
A welcome warm to Jason and his bride,
And to the heroes, came from every side.
"Long life to Jason, king of Iolchos!"
They cried, as up their caps and staves they toss.

"Long live Medea!" "Long life to our queen!"

O, never was there such a loyal scene.
Each hero then was welcomed by his name;

For each and all were long well-known to fame.

The soldiers of the king took great delight,
In cheering one and all by name, aright.

LITTLE FISHES

At'lanta was the favored one of all;
And judging from the shouts—queen of the
bawl!

The Argo then was rowed upon the
beach.

The heroes disembarked; and then was
each

Invited on the platform, or grand stand,
Erected in their honor on the strand.

The formal speech of welcome then was
made.

"I point with pride," and so forth, then was
said.

"This is the proudest moment of my
life!"

Of course was said by Jason and his wife.
But now a restive movement in the
throng,

Caused him to stop, and wonder what was
wrong.

What caused that rumbling noise—that
distant shout?

Then toward the town all eyes were turned,
in doubt.

A cloud of dust was rolling down the road;
A man was driving fast, with lash and
goad.

The crowd gave way, as he came rushing
by;

Up to the stand he drove, with flashing
eye—

The driver, car and horses of the king!



HY drive so fast?
What message do
you bring?"
Euphemus asked.
"What have you got
to say?
Come, say it quick;
we'll have no more
delay!"

"King Pelias is dead!" the man replied;
"That's why I took this little pleasure
ride!"

"Dead drunk, you mean," then Pollux,
smiling said.

"He's dead *de facto*; dead as herring
red!"

Replied the man, and mopped his reeking
brow;

"Dead as a door-nail, I assure you, now!"

"How did it happen? Tell us all you
know;

You drive quite fast, but speak too all-fired
slow,"

Euphemus said, in his impatient way.

The man took breath, and then went on
to say:

"The king was left alone; for all but
me

Left town this morning early, for the sea.

LITTLE FISHES

We were the only two left in the town.
He kept me home to polish up the crown.
He owed me six months wages, which he
said,

He'd pay to-night, if I'd stay by his bed.
His doctor, even, left him, I declare—
I see him now, sir, standing over there.



ELL, just about an hour ago,
or more,
I took him up his mail, which
looking o'er,
He found a box of powders, with a note;
I've got it here—and this is what was
wrote:

‘To knock that tired feeling out of
sight;
To make the whiskers black, instead of
white;
To make an old man young without de-
lay;
One powder must be taken, every day.’

“Then Pelias remarked: ‘I'll go you
one;
I'll take one now, in water, just for
fun;
I dreamed about this very thing last night;
And that convinces me that its all right.’
And then he took the powder, sure enough;
And smacked his lips, and then said:
‘That's the stuff! ’



UT soon he said he felt
like one on fire;
Said: 'Give me water,
or I must expire!'
And then he drank a
gallon, maybe more;
And then lay on his bed,
and tried to snore;

And failing that, he then began to kick;
Kicked all the bed-clothes off, and then the
tick;

And then he kicked the stuffing out the
bed;

But soon he kicked no more—for he was
dead."

Euphemus asked the doctor: "Do you
think

He died of poison, or from too much
drink?"

"Heart failure, I should say," he then re-
plied.

"That could not be the cause from which
he died,"

Put in the man, "For Pelias had no heart.
Kick failure, I should call it, for my part."

Medea smiled a knowing smile, 't is
said,

When this poor man proclaimed the king
was dead.

She'd sent some mail the day before, to
town,

LITTLE FISHES

By Euphemus, directed to the crown.
But whether it the powder did enclose—
That, no one, but the sender, really knows.

The man, resuming, then said: "I
have here

His crown and scepter, for to me 'twas
clear,
That I should hold them for my six month's
pay;

In fact, it seemed to me the only way.
The king had pledged to pay, in full, to
night;

I think you'll grant, in this, that I am
right.

The crown and scepter I as pledges
hold,
Until I'm reimbursed, or they'll be
sold."

Then Jason paid the man in full, and
more;

Who then the royal emblems did restore.

The Councillor of the king then rose;
said he:

"A pleasant duty now devolves on me.
For Pelias, usurper, being dead,
The crown must now be placed on Jason's
head.

I know that this vast concourse is aware,
That Jason is his father Æson's heir;
And Æson being dead, I'm proud to say,
That Jason will be crowned without delay.



LL useless ceremony we'll dispense,
And this I wish to say without offense.
The time and place and man are here, you see;
It is most opportune, you'll all agree.
And as we can not live without a king;
I'll now proceed to do the proper thing."

And then he placed the crown on Jason's head;
And in his hand the scepter placed, then said:
"By virtue of my office, I declare,
That Jason's now the king, as Æson's heir;
The king of Iolchos, in Thessaly!
Long may he live and reign o'er you and me.
The king is dead—and now Long Live the King!
The Golden Fleece to all good luck will bring!"

The people shouted loud—the heroes cheered;
While in the bay the water-nymphs appeared;
For they were loyal to the new king's cause,
And clapped their hands, in token of applause.

LITTLE FISHES

While wood-nymphs from the mountain side stole down;
With flowers and leaves they strewed the road to town.

Then Jason and Medea, king and queen,
The finest royal couple ever seen,
Rode in the car of state; the Golden Fleece,
Hung o'er their heads, an emblem now of peace.

The heroes and the councillors of state;
The prominent officials, wise and great;
In gilded vans and wains, a pageant fine,
Were followed by the multitude in line.

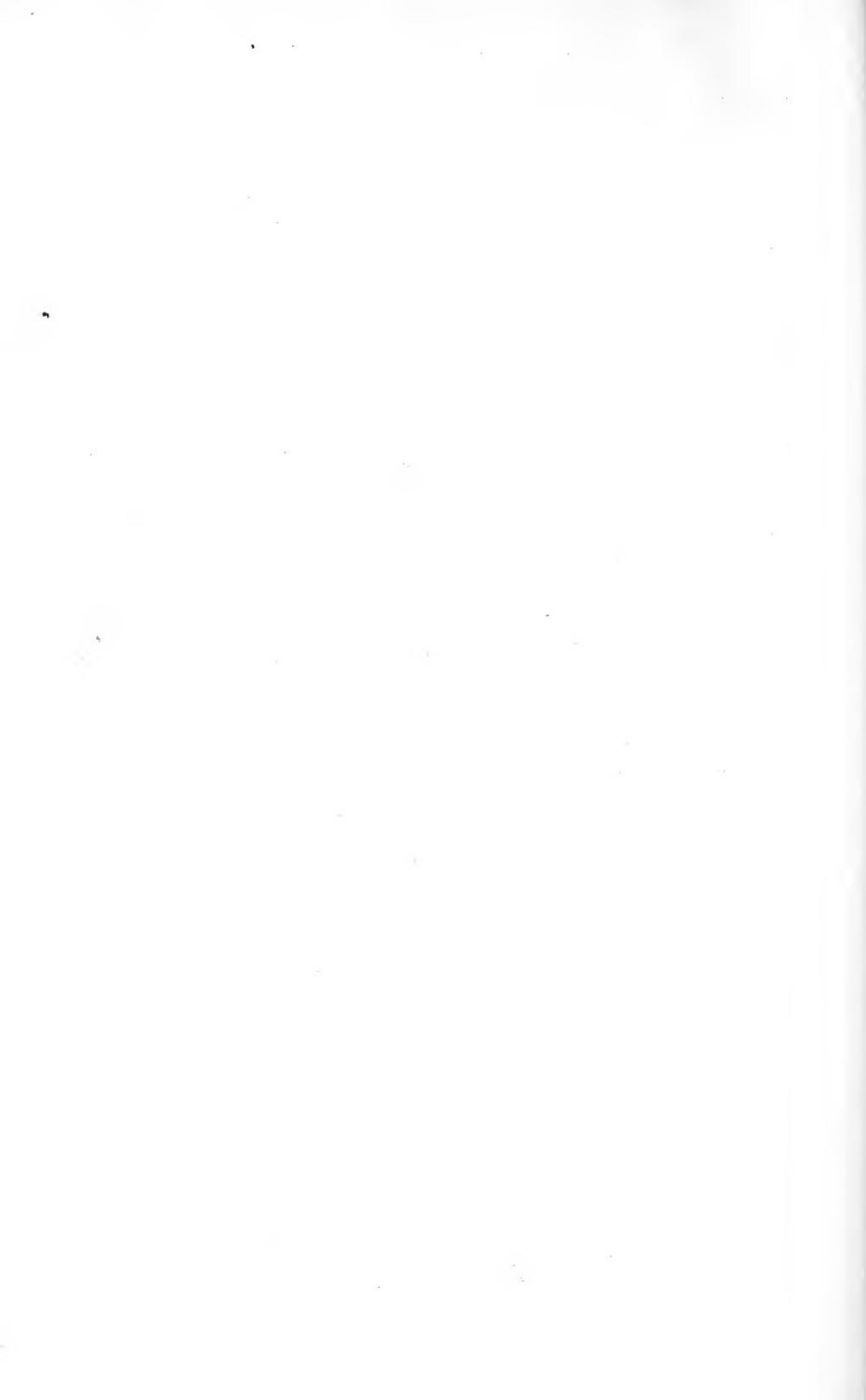
Then through the city gates to palace hall,
Where Jason and Medea welcomed all.
And then a week of feasting, and of bliss.
Another week of games then followed this.

So ends the quest of Jason for the Fleece;
And so begins his reign of Golden peace.



Finis





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